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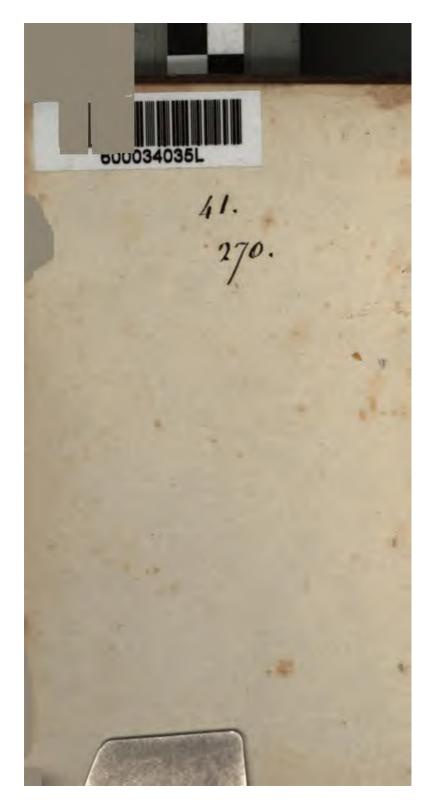
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#### THE

# MARRYING MAN.

# . A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "COUSIN GEOFFREY."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.





# LONDON: J. B. NICHOLS AND SON, PRINTERS, PARLIAMENT STREET.

# THEODORE HOOK, ESQ.

RTC. RTC.

## MY DEAR SIR,

The kindness with which you suffered an unknown Pilgrim to sit under the shadow of your laurel, and the generous zeal with which you promoted the interests of the offspring of her fancy, are indeed of those "Sayings and Doings" which awaken the memory of the heart. There are other "Sayings and Doings" of yours which will never be forgotten, while wit and genius are appreciated; but I think that those which I am proud here publicly to acknowledge, will be

received as a welcome corroboration of a great moralist's opinion; that "Good heads have generally the best hearts."

Thanking you again most warmly for your chaperonage of "Cousin Geoffrey," and hoping that "The Marrying Man," thus dedicated to you, may be as welcome to the public as was the "Old Bachelor," whom you so kindly introduced; with a deep sense of your goodness, and a high admiration for your genius,

I remain, dear Sir, Your faithful and obliged Servant,

THE AUTHORESS.

Aug. 19, 1840. Bühel, Winterthur, Canton de Zurich.

### THE

# MARRYING MAN.

## CHAPTER I.

Mr. Burridge was a marrying man, but this important fact was unknown both to the world and to himself. Having lived to the age of fifty in straitened circumstances, he had formed a thousand economical bachelor views and habits, and had contracted a horror of all extravagancies; among which he had long reckoned a wife as the most ruinous.

He would as soon have thought of keeping hunters on his two hundred a year, as of keeping a wife upon it. His circumstances suddenly changed; but the views and habits of a

VOL. I.

ticularly on his eyes and his figure, and frequently regretting that approaching age, which he chose to call "short-sightedness," obliged him to wear spectacles.

Certainly his eyes were bright—a bright green—but green is not a disagreeable colour, else nature would not be so lavish of it; and sometimes a ray of kindness would kindle, or a tear of feeling glisten in Burridge's green eyes, lending them a charm beyond that of the brightest blue or most sparkling black, if they only shone with pride and self-complacency. Well,—such as he was, he had one ardent admirer who thought his person all perfection—that one was himself.

It was a very original idea; and if such an one does sometimes strike great minds, we have generally remarked that those minds befong to the ugliest people.

Mr. Burridge was of a good family, and he had several valuable connexions. He had a cousin in the ministry; one nephew an eminent

bachelor of fifty must change very gradually, if they change at all.

We have not thought him fit company for our reader until he had been for a year or two in possession of a handsome fortune, left him by a distant relative, who had never seen him: but wealth is a passport everywhere; and therefore we venture to introduce him now, after the first awkward sense of his increased importance has worn off.

He always thought it a very strange thing that a fortune should have been left him by a person who had never seen him. It would have been still more strange if it had been left him by one who had, for in truth he was not prepossessing.

Mr. Burridge was immensely tall, high shouldered, and raw-boned. His head had once been covered with red hair; now it boasted a sandy wig. He had a slight tendency to a squint, and a hump; but this he never for a moment suspected (he was of a very unsuspicious temper), priding himself par-

ticularly on his eyes and his figure, and frequently regretting that approaching age, which he chose to call "short-sightedness," obliged him to wear spectacles.

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Mr. Burridge was of a good family, and he had several valuable connexions. He had a cousin in the ministry; one nephew an eminent

banker; and one a reviewer; yet until this sudden change in his fortune he had lived in great seclusion.

He thought it a curious coincidence, that a short time after this accession, and just when he no longer needed it, his cousin, the minister, should present him with a very handsome sinecure. Some spiteful people thought that the minister, being a married man with a large family, and having no idea that Mr. Burridge was a marrying man likely to have another, presented him with the sinecure in the hopes that he would live solely upon it, and in gratitude bequeath his fortune, rather increased than diminished, to him and his.—People have such absurd ideas!

However, neither sinecure nor inheritance made any difference in Burridge's style of living. In his poverty he had made very few acquaintances; therefore the change in his circumstances was little known, considering how rapid, in general, is the diffusion of such useful knowledge, and the few who did know it were very anxious to keep it to themselves; thinking, perhaps, that every new discoverer of Burridge's wealth would become an additional claimant for his favour, and a manœuvrer for a place in his will; where they agreed in the old adage, "the fewer the better cheer."

However, if Burridge did not think much about marriage, he thought still less about death; as to his will, the idea of making one had never once crossed his mind; while now and then, when he had taken an extra glass of wine, or when he had found no buttons on his shirts and flannel waistcoats, he had begun to calculate what that expensive, and, as he had hitherto thought, useless luxury, a wife, might cost him; at such moments the image of Jessica Thornton, a very pretty girl, the protégée niece of Sir William Vernon, one of Burridge's few intimates, seemed to hover about the corners of his dingy London sitting-room, whose darkness was rendered visible by the light of one mould candle, its fellow having been snuffed out with unconscious, because habitual, economy.

Now though Mr. Burridge certainly admired women in general, and Jessica Thornton in particular, he was only just slowly becoming aware that he was a marrying man, and, lo! ere long, the truth burst upon him, that he was a very great catch: but we anticipate the world did not suspect the truth, because he remained in his obscure lodgings, employed an old Scotch tailor, called Macbotcher, who lived in Arundel street, Strand, was very gruff and uncouth, and kept only one servant, a country lad, who had acted at once as butler, valet, nurse, and drudge. This boy, Tim, was the son of respectable parents: but from reading the Penny Magazine, and the Sunday Intelligencer, was grown literary and ambitious. He had a great idea that all men were equal: but then he knew that everything must have a beginning; and he thought and said, "that there was no place like Lunnon to make the fortune of a man of genius."

#### THE RESIDENCE RANK

Housing vin laying teen in il-math, and teen minimis by its impactant to be very minimis with large-last gloves from manning implement one bay in the manning to see The miniming fown a minimization. He offered to meet him modes are much as a five manning to see the five manning a see. This industry he can a a small increase was marked by the manning of Lannaux, beautiful its property and manning that man manners has a formally.

We have said that Burnings, increasing the man function in the man function of the man state of the man function of the man function in the man function of the man fu

comfortable to feel the want of a wife; he knows he is all-important only as long as he is single, and hold out false hopes only to beguile the fair. The reputed marrying man, whether young, middle-aged, or old, is often, in his own cold, selfish heart, the confirmed bachelor. Sometimes the wealth is as unreal as the man, and the "excellent catch" is a mere fortune-hunter in disguise—but that is another case, and not exactly in point. All we wish to enforce is, that the genuine marrying man is often a surly, bearish, contradictory, parsimonious old fellow—ungallant, and apparently caring little for women,—living in no style,—therefore the better able to afford a wife.

And such persons (alas, for these unhappy times!), often, when their circumstances are clearly ascertained, are joyfully accepted, not merely by interested parents, but interesting daughters. Mr. Burridge was in his sitting-room, taking an economical bachelor's privilege of completing his toilet by his only fire—which fire, being habitually kept low, and only fed with cheap and therefore inferior coals, was little more than a small mass of black powder, with a wreath of green smoke struggling to rise—like timid Genius, in its first battle with Fate. The sun, which for a December sun was a very bright one, had helped at once to put out the fire, and to reconcile Mr. Burridge to its extinction.

"Never mind the fire, Tim," he said, as Tim knelt down to blow it, and piled the shovel and tongs perpendicularly, as he said, to make it "draw," a common and often useless contrivance. "Never mind it; the sun warms the room sufficiently, and coals are very dear this winter. Besides, when I'm going out, I always like the fire to be going out too!"

"But, sur, you aint agoing out, surely, with that 'ere cold ?"

"Why, yes, Tim, now you've rubbed me so thoroughly, I feel much better."

"These 'ere patent 'ossair renowators is a fust-rate invention, sur," said Tim, looking at the instruments of friction with awe, and trying them on his own hand.

"Put them away, Tim," said Burridge, "you'll wear them out!"

"Why, no, sur, I beant so rough as all that, neither; all men is hequals — and

"Hold your tongue—here, just arrange my hair."

Burridge could not bear to call it a wig, even to Tim: he was a man who liked to fancy himself a hero, even to his valet de chambre; and where is the hero would own to wearing a wig?

"There: how do you think I look now?"

"Beautiful, sur! I've rubbed you as smooth as glass—you don't look like the same!"

"Well, Tim, here, remove these books and papers—I can't settle to any thing to-day: I think I shall go and call on the Vernons."

- "Well, sur, if you'll folly my adwice, you will."
- "Did you ever see Miss Jessica Thornton, Tim?"
  - "Yes, sur, she gave me a shilling once."
- "Very extravagant that," answered Burridge, shaking his head.
- "She gave it me, sur, when I took that 'ere note from you, a hasking for the hophodildock, when you had the rheumatis, and she asked all about it, and told me how to use it; and then she said, 'Good bye, Tim,' and she give me a shilling."
- "Ah! 'twas then she gave it him," muttered Burridge: "that makes a difference. Tim, should you like to have a mistress?"
- "I walues wartue and repitation as father done afore me; but I shouldn't object to a wife, if I could afford one."
- "You mistake me," said Burridge, gravely,
  "I mean, should you like me to have a wife?—

as I am your master, my wife would be your mistress."

"Oh! what, a grand lady, sur! in course she would—I shouldn't object, sur, if she wor sootable."

"But don't you think, Tim, I'm too old to marry?"

"No, sur, but I thinks you're too old to be single."

"Bravo! Tim, a capital answer. I begin to think so too. Well, I'm going out. First, I shall go into the city, to buy some of those eight-penny-halfpenny gloves, I've seen advertised:—the idea of paying half-a-crown for light kid gloves, that one can't wear a dozen times without the expense of having them cleaned, when one can get them for eight-pence halfpenny, by just looking about one! And then I shall call at the Vernons. Now, Tim, be careful, and don't waste anything. Mr. Medler, over the way, tells me he sometimes sees a blazing fire in this room when

I'm out, and that you seem to be sauntering about, looking out of the window, and doing nothing!"

"It's nothing but his wiciousness, sur. I never has a good fire, but when I'm expecting you, and afeard you'll be cold. I'm above burning the coals up for myself; it's a wile inwention; and I never looks out a window but to see whether you're a coming, sur, and then, sure enough, I sees him; he does nothing but spy and tell tales. He's no gentleman, I'm sure."

"Yes, Tim, he is: so speak respectfully of him."

"Well, sur, and if he is, all men is hequals, according to natur and immutable justis, both he as wurks and he as sits at home hidle, a running of him down; and he 'ave wounded a hequal in a tender pint!"

"Keep such folly to yourself, Tim: I am going to the Vernons. That gruel was excellent—you can finish it—there is plenty left, with a piece of bread; it will do for your dinner; and mind you have my broth and boiled mutton, with the turnips well mashed, ready by five. There, do I look well in front, with this coat, Tim?"

- "You looks most becoming, sur."
- " And how do I look behind?"

"Better still, sur," said Tim, following to open the door; then returning, he stirred up the fire, and extravagantly put on two bundles of wood. "Better still," he muttered to himself, "at least to my taste: I'm glad enough to see your back for a time, master.—Nice, indeed!" he said, tasting the wretched luke-warm remains of the gruel: "master and I are of wery different opinions on that pint. Yet he aint a bad master neither; and I, being a good survant, desarves good fare!" So saying, Tim threw the gruel under the grate; retired to a sort of larder, returned with a gridiron and a large piece of the mutton originally destined for his master's dinner; he broiled it; then taking

a key out of the pocket of the coat Burridge had just taken off, he opened a cellaret, and mixed himself a splendid tumbler of brandy and water; drew down the blinds, put his feet on the fender, warmed himself before the now excellent fire, and said, rubbing his hands with delight, "That's what I calls comfort-I only wishes Mrs.Flounce were here, on the other side, with just such another glass. How my arm do ache with rubbing master down! Come, it would be too bad to work like a 'oss, and then dine on water-gruel, and that with all the good out of the grits-master took care of that! Ah! these are the best renowaters after allthey beats the 'patent'oss 'air' ones all to nothing!"

### CHAPTER II.

"I BEG you will put away all your drawings, Jessica," said Lady Vernon, haughtily, to her pale but pretty protégée; "I doubt not several people will call to-day, Aurelia was so very much admired last night at Mrs. Winter's, particularly by Captain Delamere and Mr. Dempster.—Do you hear me, Jessica? I feel convinced that they, at least, will call, and these drawings not only make the room look untidy, but, what is far worse, appear spread out for effect."

Jessica at first blushed and looked abashed: but, ashamed of weakly yielding to a captious tyranny, which she felt it was her duty in some degree to bear up against, she smiled while she placed the drawings in her portfolio, and said, "I will put them away, as you wish it, aunt; but who could suspect that they were spread out for effect?"

"All young men of fortune, Jessica, suspect everything like display in women who have none."

"Well, I should despise the wealthiest and the grandest among them, aunt, if I found him in youth already disfigured by the worst fault of age, suspicion!—Effect, indeed! the only effect I should like this drawing to have would be, to show Captain Delamere, in my 'dying Wolsey,' the end of vanity, pride, and pomp; while I should like poor Mr. Dempster to learn from this, one historical fact, namely, that one Ann Boleyn married Henry the Eighth: he would never get even that into his head by any ordinary process."

"Mr. Dempster is not more ignorant than most young men, who think themselves very clever, nor half so stupid as many young women who set themselves up as wits. You dislike him because he does not notice you much, he does not talk to you, dance with you on all occasions."

" Oh! I should dislike him much more if he did."

"Perhaps, then, Captain Delamere, who does, is an object of still greater aversion to you?

"I am not aware that he does, aunt; indeed I am quite sure that if he did, his servile imitator, Mr. Dempster, would do so too; and being obliged to receive the attentions of Mr. Dempster would be an odious tax to pay for those of Captain Delamere."

"I do not think you need be alarmed. Dempster is not like Delamere in any one thing; he has a horror of all women who set up as wits and blues."

" So has every one, I think."

" Not Captain Delamere, surely, my dear?"

" Why ?"

"He often addresses his conversation to you—he danced with you several times last night. Pray is he not odious too?"

And Lady Vernon fixed a searching glance on Jessica, whose colour deepened to a very suspicious crimson: but she tried to laugh away her embarrassment, while she replied, "It is not Captain Delamere I dislike, it is his pride and love of show, so unworthy of one so gifted, so ...."

"Oh, dear! that is quite enough; girls should never panegyrize young men, my love. I am glad that Delamere is a proud man—pride is a great protection to young men of family and fortune; and I am sure he has no more of it than becomes one who, at the death of a sickly child, will be Earl of Mandeville, and who is now the representative of a very ancient family, with a good income, a highly cultivated estate and—mind," her ladyship added, after a pause.

Jessica smiled archly. "Ah, you gave the

estate the first place, aunt, and you were right—that may be highly cultivated: but if he had really cultivated his mind (I do not mean his talents, but his mind), would it not have yielded a different harvest—one of humility, not of pride? Would he not have learnt...."

"A great deal more patience than I can boast, my dear, if he could listen to a long essay from a young and very self-sufficient person."

A thundering knock was heard at the street door. "I wonder who it is!" said Lady Vernon, anxiously rising to retreat through the back drawing-room door. Jessica had started up with the same intention. Both ladies had glanced at their apparel, and both had come to the conclusion that they were not dressed to advantage; but Jessica had reseated herself. It does not matter who it is, she thought; are not all alike? all equally trifling, egotistical, and affected? I am ashamed to feel my heart flutter and my cheek burn at the thought that

tee of these quintum allers is named to show himself, and buse away at more uses.

What is it to me !—that me —it what is it to me !—that me —it what is it to me !—that me —it what is it.

I may be, said Lady Vermin, madin removed in may be, said Lady Vermin, madin removeding to put her head in at the lady manner, room dose. I make change my first, as yours will be very well. Lady Vermin was in a rich sile Jessies in a plain mermin.—'I will go un't haster fureful and have a remove your postfolds, put it makes me music mouse.'

Lary Vermin littlet LVEY, Jessen were to the window. All she count see was the mont of a calcifron bemean which provides a near or grapeful hands in behave grey out gower touting the rems.

Two young men spring our desser manify glanced at a holding glass, and then results to the plane force. When the visition were supported, she was lumping over finance: any written

" Captain Delamere and Mr. Dempster."

Jessica rose and welcomed them. She shook hands with Mr. Dempster, but merely bowed to Captain Delamere.

I wonder why she does not shake hands with me! thought the latter. If she has known Dempster a little longer, I thought she liked me much better, and knew me better too; and she has seated herself by him!—I gave her credit for better taste.

"Pray is Miss Vernon at home—I mean Lady Vernon?" he said, coldly addressing Jessica.

"Lady Vernon is at home," said Jessica, smiling archly, and answering only to what he professed to mean; and then good-naturedly added, "and Aurelia too, I believe."

A pause, one of those awkward pauses so common in morning visits, ensued.

Delamere remarked that it was a fine day.

Dempster, as if a new idea had struck him, exclaimed—"It really is a remarkably fine day."

- "But," said Delamere, "I find it rather cold, Miss Thornton."
- "I am very cold," said Dempster, rubbing his hands.

Jessica was much amused in noticing how closely Dempster had contrived to copy his friend Delamere in the arrangement of his hair, his attitude, his dress; and yet how very unlike they were: the similarity of dress made the contrast of person, of manner, and expression only the more striking.

- "Were you not playing when we came in?" asked Delamere.
  - " I was trying a new waltz."
  - " I wish you would try it again."
- "Oh, I am sure so do I," echoed Dempster, who never knew what to do with his hands, and could not learn Delamere's art of doing nothing with a good grace.
- "We stood on the stairs listening to you," said Delamere.
  - "Yes, that we did."

Jessica was very sorry to hear it. She was playing merely as an excuse, not to seem to be expecting them; and she knew that she had acquitted herself wretchedly.

"It was that beautiful last waltz of Strauss's, was it not?"

"And beautifully played too, wasn't it, Delamere?" said Dempster, venturing a little alone.

"It is scarcely fair to judge of a performance heard so indistinctly," said Delamere. "If Miss Thornton would play the same air again, I would venture an opinion."

Jessica looked at Captain Delamere. This unwonted frankness in a man of fashion pleased her: the discrimination he had shown excited her vanity.

"As it is evident," she said, smiling, "that your applause, if given at all, will be sincere, it is worth aiming at." She went to the piano forte and played the waltz, including some very difficult variations, with great expression and effect. Delamere followed her, and Dempster of course followed him.

"I can now, in all sincerity, express my atmiration of the waltz, and the performance," said Delamere. "I thought, when I saw that it was you who had been playing, that you could have done it more justice."

Jessica coloured; he had thought about her.
"I presume Miss Verson must be a fine
musician."

Jessica hated to seem II-natured: but she could not say. Yes.

- " Did you never hear her play 17
- "No: I never heard you till to-day."
- "Ah! but then I was always at school before you went abroad: still I thought you might have heard Aurelia and Lucy play in their childhood?"
- "Oh! no: I never inflet such a penance either upon childhood or myself. I remember as a very young man, before I went alread, thinking Aurelia would become a premy

woman: but I had forgotten her so completely that I was quite surprised when, a few months ago, asking the name of 'that very beautiful girl riding with Mrs. Winter,' I heard it was Aurelia Vernon!"

" It is very wonderful," said Dempster.

"I am sure she is a fine musician," repeated Delamere. "Does she not play very well?"

"You must judge for yourself. What makes you think that she is a fine musician?"

"Oh! there is a soul, a feeling, a Saint Cecilia something in her eyes and air."

"That there certainly is," said Dempster.

"She reminds me forcibly of Byron's Zuleika," remarked Delamere. "As I look at her I enter into that dazzlingly beautiful idea,

\* The mind the music breathing from her face.' "

Jessica felt a little jealous; too much so to smile at Dempster's "So do I."

What a choking, hateful feeling, is that first little half-tearful half-angry sensation of jealousy!

- "Does Miss Vernon sing?"
- " Not often."
- " What a pity !"
- "A very great pity!" echoed Dempster.

Jessica could not help smiling: the truth was, that the beautiful Aurelia had no ear, and a voice like that of a peacock.

- "Whose are these drawings?" asked Delamere, who in looking over the music had come suddenly on Jessica's portfolio: "they are really very good."
- "They're very good, really," said Dempster, seizing on one, and pointing with his dat moust finger to the delicate face of Ann Boleyn.
- "Take care, Dempster!" said Delamere, with the fellow feeling of an artist: "few may cheeks could stand so rude a touch, I believe."

How very sarcastic, thought Jessica, perhaps —(for she felt her cheeks were flushed—perhaps he fancies mine could not; and at the thought her colour grew deeper.

"These water-colour drawings are really very

good," said Delamere, after a few minutes' close scrutiny: "Pray, whose are they?"

"They are mine," said Jessica.

"I meant," said Delamere, smiling, " by whom are they executed?"

"I understood you so."

"Indeed! Do you really mean that they were designed and painted by yourself?"

"Yes. Why are you surprised?"

"Because they are so very masterly and bold."

"Your explanation is not a very flattering one."

" No, but I thought you despised flattery."

"But I do not despise politeness."

And Jessica was evidently rather piqued, though she assumed a smile.

"In future I will be as ceremoniously polite as even you could wish," said Captain Delamere, with a scornful glance, and a slight curl of the lip: "all I meant was, that those drawings were unladylike—that the delicate, minute "In short," said Jessica, smiling, " you are very much surprised if a female successis at anything."

"I never knew one to fall in one time."

and he smiled, as if intending a compliment.

- And what may that one thing he?
- "In resembly the slightest remark which she can construct into a disparagement of her sead."

At this moment the four opened and Auralia Vernor came in, dressed for riding. She appeared much surprised at finding that Jessies was not alone. Lady Vernote followed ner and glauced very angelly at Jessies as she remarked that her drawings had been the suspen of discussion: but the feeling passes every when she noted how eagerly Captain Dearmers left Jessies to approach Aurelia, and how mainguised was his admiration of her beautiful face and form.

Aurelia was in truth belle à miracle. She had every thing in her favour: features at once regular, delicate, and of a noble order of beauty; the fairest skin, with that light vermilion tint upon the cheek never seen but in England, and seldom there, and which was in her set off by the blackest hair. Her eyes were of the wild, bright blue of the black bird's egg, but their lashes jet black. Connoisseurs could find no fault in her beauty; even women could only say, "She's not to my taste. I do not like her style! She's too tall. I don't like your perfect beauties—they want expression!"

Variety of expression Aurelia Vernon might want, but that you only found out upon a long acquaintance. Phrenology would have sworn she was a genius, for her brow was high and full. And Phrenology would have added one more to her countless blunders—for Aurelia was a beautiful dunce. Physiognomy would have pronounced her loving, gentle, impassioned, for her eye was at once soft and bright—and

perverse cow that ever kicked down pail.—No, Aurelia was nothing but a beauty. She had neither genius nor feeling—but some cunning, and great obstinacy. And her graceful head contained a few ideas, of which the leading ones were:

That she was divinely handsome, and every other woman a perfect fright;—that her beauty ought to procure her a first-rate establishment; -that Captain Delamere was rich, noble, and might become an earl;—that all stratagems were fair in love:—that a dignified silence suited her style, — and that, — as she found it hard to learn,-she must study chiefly to conceal her ignorance;—that silence was generally attributed to modesty rather than to dulness, and reserve to dignity rather than to want of feeling; — that nature had gifted her eyes and complexion with an eloquence denied to her tongue, and therefore it were best to let them speak for her; - that it seemed very graceful to be affectionate to every one, but particularly so to poor dependant Jessica Thornton.

All these ideas had not originated in so barren a soil as Aurelia's brain, but they had been engrafted there by her mother, and were now become a part of the head itself.

"How very good these drawings are; I have done nothing but admire them for the last half hour," said Delamere, with a look which shewed that he had now something else to admire.

"Oh! yes, they are very clever: but Jessica succeeds in all she undertakes."

How different that cordial tribute to Jessica's envious reply, when I asked her if Aurelia played, thought Delamere. Your moderately pretty women are envious and spiteful, but a perfect beauty has nothing to fear, and therefore can afford to be generous.

"Who did you say this was?" said Dempster, again pointing to Ann Boleyn.

"Ann Boleyn, wife of Henry the Eighth," said Jessica, smiling. "Oh! come." said Dempster. " was rejoking: I always thought June of Em was the wife of Henry the Enginth.—wann't site. Description.

"I wish she had been: and has my off asbead, instead of leating him not of new-seen a warfike spirit would have summ non netter than the centile Anna."

"Well, but surely six was," and Bennauer, who was both predictedly ignorant and were argumentative, and who had a sew times strangely jumited in his head, while his meaning seminated in his lawning seminated in his lawning seminated in his lawning seminated in his particular where he had been marriaged in a rainy day, John of him and Hemmonia Lightly hard as pairs.

" Mr. Dempster is indy plaining Jessien." said Lady Vermin, who liked in snow more stirring Jessien was, and in make her in memor when she could.

"Oh Jessica knows that," and correct spongerically. "I should think every one must have known that," said Dempster, who now saw his mistake, and grew very red and very angry, and ever after owed Jessica a grudge; but, as she had foretold, learned—never to forget—who Ann Boleyn was.

"I like the dying Cardinal best," said Lady Vernon, who was in hopes that the thoughtless Jessica would say something pointed about pride and vanity to offend Captain Delamere; but she was out of spirits, and remained silent.

"Where are you going to ride, Miss Vernon?"

" Only in Hyde Park."

"Who is going with you?"

" Mrs. Winter."

"Will you allow me to attend you? Dempster, will you go home in my cab, and order my horse?"

"Yes, but I shall return with mine, too," said Dempster, who always did exactly what

Delamere, or any other person whom he copied for the time, did.

Mrs. Winter lived next door. In a very short time Dempster re-appeared on horseback, with Delamere's groom and horses, and all were anxious to set out.

## CHAPTER III.

It was December; but Summer seemed to have lent Winter a day, in return for the very many she borrows of him in England. The sun was bright, the breeze soft: "Let us not lose a moment of this enchanting weather," said Delamere, slightly bowing to Jessy, and shaking hands with Lady Vernon.—"I will take every possible care of her," he said, as it were in reply to some exhortations of Lady Vernon to Aurelia about the management of her horse.

Jessica threw up the window to see them set out; she marked him assist Aurelia to mount—she beheld him examine, with the most scrupulous care, the bit, the bridle, the saddle; and then linger for a moment, looking up at the fair Amazon, who blushed as she met his gaze. Jessica saw him rein in his steed, to keep pace with hers, and spring from it to pick up a piece of scarlet geranium which she had dropped; but he did not restore it to her, he placed it in the button of his own coat, and looked up at the windows, thinking to see Lady Vernon, but Jessica alone was there. He had intended to kiss his hand to Lady Vernon, but he only bowed coldly to Jessica; she was ashamed to be detected watching him so eagerly, and drew back in haste.

How well they are matched in form and face, thought Jessica: how ill in every thing else. She looked once more from the window; they had turned the angle of the square. Delamere rode by Aurelia, and Dempster by Mrs. Winter, while the grooms were betting on the probability of a double match. How bright and fine it is, thought Jessica. Why do I

feel so dull—so desolate? I will go and sun myself in the square. The sun of December! Ah! well, no matter, I feel as if no sun could cheer me to-day. Jessy turned. Alas! not so fast, poor Jessy—she encountered the King of bores,—Mr. Burridge, the Marrying Man!

Now it happened that for certain family reasons Sir William and Lady Vernon were particularly anxious to conciliate Mr. Burridge, and as they shrank themselves from his egotistical prosing, and startling want of tact, they often threw the whole burden of entertaining him on poor Jessica. Jessica's society he liked, and never seemed offended at the non-appearance of the other members of the family, if Jessica were left to listen to him by the hour. When she was in good spirits, her keen sense of the ridiculous enabled her sometimes to draw a little amusement from her ill-assorted companion; besides, he was often surlily kind (and few were kind to her), had some good qualities. and was more than old enough to be her

father, she being three and twenty and he three and fifty years of age. All these claims, added to her own extreme goodness of heart, prevented her from ever displaying the impatience and ennui she felt. Yet, whenever she could shun him, without appearing to do so, she did; and often she felt how selfish and cruel it was in others to throw such a burden upon her. We have said that she was turning from the window to leave the room, when Mr. Burridge came close up to her, took her hand, looked into her face, and said, "How do ye do, Jess?"

Jessy laughed to avoid crying.

"I hope you are quite well, Mr. Burridge," she said, retreating a step or two, as he always came most inconveniently near, but the window intercepted her, and she could retreat no farther.

He pushed her a chair, and drew one close to it for himself, keeping tight hold of hers as if to secure her. "No, Jessy, no: I'm not at all well. I don't know whether I may have taken any thing that has disagreed with me yesterday; I over-ate myself, I suspect. I had such a beautiful bit of roast pork for dinner, and I could not resist the crackling. Ah! you may well be shocked: but that's not all—I was fool enough to eat pastry, and cheese, and a lot of nuts afterwards; but I'll tell you all about it."

"Alas, alas!" mentally ejaculated poor Jessica: then suddenly, with animation, "No, Mr. Burridge, you had better not—all the Doctors agree that nothing is so bad for an invalid as to talk of his complaint, so I won't let you do so."

"Well, you'll be the loser, for not only it's curious to think how some things disagree with one, but it might be a warning to yourself: however, you never think of yourself, Jessy; I will say that for you. Others don't think the less of you on that account though; so, this morning, finding I couldn't write nor read,

nor do any thing, after drinking half a dozen cups of tea, I wrapped my head up in flannel and lay down on the sofa. Well, it's a curious thing, that I fell asleep now, and when I woke my fire was out, and my feet were like ice, and I felt somehow so giddy and stupid that I wasn't fit for any thing; so I thought I'd take a basin of hot gruel and then make an effort and come and sit with you. It's now about two o'clock, and I can stay here till my dinner time."

It will be seen that Mr. Burridge had acquired a habit but too common to all who live much alone, that of dwelling upon and magnifying every little detail connected with himself. The solitary have little to divert their attention from themselves, and generally become egotistically prosing. Those who dwell with others find in the actions of others a perpetual source of attention—those who dwell alone become habitually, and often inevitably, engrossed by themselves.

How unfortunate again, inwardly ejaculated poor Jessy.

"You musn't keep me, though, after halfpast five; for as I'm so ill, I've ordered boiled mutton and turnips, and I mean to eat a good basin of the broth."

"Did you find it cold out of doors?" asked Jessica, anxious to turn the conversation.

"Why, you see, I've a good great coat: by the by, I may as well take it off, and perhaps I'd better unrol this muffler. Here, just help me off with this; there, that'll do—I don't know that I should have found it cold if I'd been well, but I'd such chills up my back and my feet just like ice, and the cold seemed somehow to have settled in my stomach...."

"Oh! do let me get you a glass of wine," said Jessica, dreadfully weary of being wedged in so that she could not stir, and anxious to get Lucy or Lady Vernon to break the tête-à-tête.

"No, no, just stay where you are snug and comfortable, can't you?" and again he grasped her chair.

- \*Oh. I'm mendione u per you a pane or wine?"
- "I sell you I dist ? went any " and in these chart to prevent her exic.
- \*But I have but no humbern recent and I want something."
- \*Oh. that's quite additional jung? and he does back to let her pass, sulky and married. for though wery addition in some though n though wery addition. Jersy left the youn to order the may. She may us starts Larry Vernan was in her irreseng-your, wing in the suit, reading a navel.
- \*Wil you not some nown to Mr. Bur-
- No, my fear. I'm not well said Larvenne, who was not commitment to move Tou must some him, have well and the word see his prime involution. This my tear, and can him made a good humanur, he for William has some favour to said if him, and would not have him offended for the word.

The voice of kindness, however interested, was so new to Jessica from Lady Vernon, that she forbore to press her further; she hastened to Lucy's room.

Lucy was superintending the alteration of a dress. "Oh, Lucy, do come down, Mr. Burridge is there, and I am beset to death."

"Well, I'm sure it's very kind of you to wish me to be so too."

"No, it is not that, Lucy; I do not ask you to go alone, but a tête-à-tête with him is so great a trial, and I feel so out of spirits to-day."

"Poor thing," said Lucy, who had very good feelings; "but you see I am not dressed."

"Oh, what does that matter? Slip on any dress: only do come down."

A knock was heard at the door. The maid brought in the message: "Mr. Burridge's compliments to Miss Thornton, and begged to know whether she was coming down again, because if not he'd go home."

"Oh, he is offended!" said poor Jessica:

"what will Lady Vernon say. How angry my uncle will be!" And the victim hastened down stairs.

She found Mr. Burridge putting on his great coat, with a cloud on his brow: he continued to button it, glowering at her through his spectacles: he was a long time arranging his surtout and his comforter, at last he took his hat. Jessy in the meantime had mixed him some hot wine and water.

- "Well, good day to you, Miss Jessica."
- "Why, you are not going?"
- "Yes I am, though; I'm not used to be de trop any where: when I call on my friends to be amused, I don't expect to be left to amuse myself!"
- "Nor were you," said Jessy; "I only just ran up stairs to get the keys. Come, sit down, and take what I have prepared for you."
- "No, I won't; I shall take myself off: that's all I'll take."
  - "Very well," said Jessica, who had some-

times found where conciliatory measures failed belligerent ones succeeded, "if that is the way you receive attentions, I shall not trouble you with any in future," and she walked to the fire and waved a hand-screen with well-assumed indignation.

Burridge was awed; he had never seen Jessica aught but gentle and yielding; he put down his hat, skulked to the fire-place, and said:—"If I'm in your way, Jessy, just say so; and if not, let's go on talking comfortably: as I told you before, I can only stay till half-past five."

He took off his coat again, swallowed the wine and water, and returned to the table (where Jessica had seated herself) invigorated, to commence a new series of egotistical borings.

"And where are they all, this morning?" he asked; for he was rudely curious about the affairs of others.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Lady Vernon is not well."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Some fine lady ailment, I suppose: an ex-

cuse for lying on a sofa and reading a trashy novel. I never expect much good of a family where the mistress reads novels and complains of head-aches."

Ill as Lady Vernon generally behaved to Jessica, her quick sense of propriety made her indignant at these remarks, but she knew no one would thank her if, in defending her aunt, she offended Mr. Burridge; she therefore merely said, in a half-playful manner, "Ah! Mr. Burridge—

- 'The faults of our neighbours with freedom we blame, Not heeding how often we practise the same.'"
- "Why now, Jessy, when did I lie on the sofa?"
- "Did you not tell me you fell asleep on one this morning?"
- "Ah, you little mischievous thing!" and he edged his chair nearer to her, and began to twitch the fringe of her apron. Jessy backed a little; he advanced, and in this manner, quite unconsciously to himself, chased her almost-

round the table, Jessy suppressing her half angry laughter at finding herself once more at the point she had started from, and vexed beyond measure at the prolongation of this annoying tête-à-tête.

- "And where's Aurelia?"
- "She is riding in Hyde Park."
- "And who 's with her?"
- "Captain Delamere and . . . . "
- " And is she out alone with him?"
- "No, Mrs. Winter is with her."
- "Ah! worse still: that scandalising painted creature, without a good word to say of any one!"
- "Is she singular in that want of charity?" asked Jessy, archly.
- "Ah, you little moralising tyrant!" and again he twitched her apron, and again Jessy retreated.
- "I'll tell you what, Jessy, I think Aurelia's a great fool to encourage that young coxcomb in following her about every where, and lounging away his mornings here."

At this moment Lucy entered, with her work-basket, and an arch smile at the provoked Jessy, as she marked the propinquity of Mr. Buridge.

He did not rise or bow, for he always dispensed with every unnecessary ceremony. He merely nodded, and said, "How do you do, Lucy?" and then he repeated his last remark for her benefit.

Lucy, who liked to draw him out, merely said, "Ah! Mr. Burridge is not the only beau who likes to lounge away his precious time in our drawing-room."

He vouchsafed no reply to Lucy, but drawing a little nearer to Jessy, enquired, "Pray, Jessy, am I a handsome young coxcomb?"

Jessy could not say Yes, and did not like to say No.

He answered his question himself—"Thank Heaven I'm not; and, what's more, I never was. Therefore, Miss Lucy, your pointed witicism does n't at all apply. If, when I was vol. I.

of Captain Delamere's age, I'd spent my time in music, and dancing, and philandering with young ladies, I should n't be what I am now."

"No; that you certainly would not," said Lucy.

And as Mr. Burridge did not see the smile and implied sarcasm, he said, looking benignly at Lucy through his spectacles, "Well, then, Lucy, isn't there some difference in my conversation and Captain Delamere's—in my manners and Captain Delamere's? Isn't it a different thing to spend a morning with me and one with that young puppy?"

"Certainly," said Lucy, "your conversation and manners are as unlike as possible; and, as you say, the time does pass very differently with you and Captain Delamere. Why, Jessy, you cannot deny that?"

"Oh! no, no," said Jessy, trying to suppress her laughter.

Mr. Burridge glanced from one to the other with a sort of proud benignity.

Lucy was considered the genius and philosopher of the family; and this tribute drawn from her, in the presence of Jessy, whom he sometimes suspected of a wish to depreciate him, filled his heart with triumph.

"Lucy," said Jessica, sighing for some little change, "suppose you sing Mr. Burridge a song."

Lucy went to the piano forte; with a very sweet voice, and in a very unaffected manner she began, "The Wind and the Beam loved the Rose." Whether it was merely the mournful and inexplicable beauty of the words, or whether the tale of hopeless love struck some answering chord in Jessy's heart, we know not; but tears rose to her eyes, and a not unpleasing sadness filled her soul. It was a luxury to listen; and to enjoy it more abstractedly, she rose and went to the window: but presently she heard a cracked squeaky voice join Lucy's soft notes.

Mr. Burridge fancied he had caught the air.

He, too, rose, went to the piano, and deliberately accompanied poor Lucy, who now could scarcely bring out a note for laughter, at the strange sounds and the pomposity with which they were emitted.

"Is every enjoyment of life to be thus embittered by that torment of my existence?" said Jessica to herself, in a fit of passionate despair: but she was not allowed the luxury of a prolonged soliloquy. Mr. Burridge had found a trio, which he fancied he knew; and Jessy, dreading to offend him, was obliged to take a part.

The sound of a tin trumpet,—a hurdy-gurdy,
—a bagpipe, would have been heavenly music
compared to Mr. Burridge's voice. Yet he
not only sung the long trio through, with all
the runs, shakes, and turns, but he encored
himself. Lucy mischievously applauded; and
Jessy, in the hope that if his thirst for praise
were sated at once, he would be satisfied for a
time, faintly added her tribute of commendation.

The enchanted Burridge grew purple with pride and joy; his eyes shone through his spectacles like two green suns.

He turned to Lucy, and said, "Really, I think, Lucy, you've more taste for music than Jessy has. I declare I'm a little tired: but do you think, now, that Captain Delamere, with all his guitars and Italian signors and signoras, ever sung any thing like that? Say what you think, Lucy; you know I hate flattery. Did you ever hear him get through such a difficult piece in that style?"

- "I can truly say I never did," replied Lucy, with the air of a martyr at the shrine of truth.
- "And yet I never had a lesson in my life." He then returned to his place by the table.
- "Lucy," he said, (for she seemed in high favour,) "have you any corns?"
  - " Any what?"
  - "Any corns on your feet?"
  - "Oh, heaven!" murmured both the girls.
  - " Have you, though?"

"No:" said Lucy. "When did you ever hear of a young lady with such horrid things?"

"When did you ever hear of a young lady without them? Pinching up their feet, as they do, they deserve to have them: but, thank heaven, my feet are not pinched up;" and to prove the truth of the assertion he put out a huge foot, in a boat-like shoe. "There," he said, "would Delamere or Dempster ever have the sense to wear a shoe like that?"

"I don't think it would fit either of them," said Jessica.

"Don't you, Miss Jessica? then let me tell you, it would fit them fifty times better than the tight torturing things they do wear. I'll bet you any thing you like, my foot in reality is the smallest among them"—and he stroked the huge and shapeless mass—"but I am not one to sacrifice my walk for a tight boot. I should like to see them get along like that," and he got up, and hobbled very fast and with awkward consequence across the room. He

stopped before Lucy, and said, "Now, Lucy, you wouldn't believe I've got corns."

- "Stop," said Lucy, "you really must not talk of such shocking things."
- "Nonsense: why, if you've got them you can't talk or think of anything else. I thought you might know of some cure."
- "Put your feet in boiling water," said Lucy, wickedly; and whispered to Jessy, "If he does, it will keep him at home for some days."
- "Not till you've tried the remedy yourself first," retorted Burridge; and he at once became rather sulky, for he could not bear ridicule.
- "What are you going to do to-night?" he asked in a little while; for he wanted to hear his own voice again.
- "We are going to the play," answered both the girls at once: for they feared he was about to propose coming to tea.
- "To the play, are you? and pray what are you going to squander your money there for?"

"We are not going to squander," said Lucy, laughing: "we have a private box to see the Lady of Lyons."

"Why, you're not going to see that again, are you? To my certain knowledge you've seen it half a dozen times."

"And to my certain knowledge I should like to see it half a dozen times more."

"Ah, well! I'm going to my boiled mutton.
I've no patience with ye—if you'd not been going out, I'd have come to tea with you."

"Oh! what an escape," murmured Jessy.

"But, Lucy," said Burridge, as he sulkily put on his coat, "I want to know what good you expect from seeing the Lady of Lyons again; you, who are a sensible girl?"

"Good!" said Lucy, with, for her, unwonted enthusiasm: "why I see the good that all the world sees. A story of such strange, new, and stirring interest, that I forget it is a fiction, and tremble as if I watched the heart-struggles of two passionate beings in real life." "And what's the good of that?"

"Good! you might as well ask what is the good of painting's noblest efforts — Mozart's most heavenly strains—the good of Shakspeare, Milton—of aught that purifies the soul and teaches the heart to feel!"

"Well, and so I do; I feel my corns, and they're quite enough for me: so good bye to ye both."

"Stop," said Lucy, "you are not so bad as you seem;" for she felt a sort of pity for the sulky, desolate, yet good-hearted old fellow, going back to his lone lodging.

"Yes, I am."

They both laughed so good-humouredly that Burridge hobbled back.

"I'll get him to go to the play too," whispered Lucy.

"No, for my sake, do not," murmured Jessy, involuntarily clasping her hands; but Lucy, intent on mischief, heard her not.

"No," said Lucy, "I think, after all, you've

a great deal of feeling, and I want you to see the Lady of Lyons; if.... Ah! but now tell me the truth, did you ever see it?"

Burridge actually blushed, hung his head like a detected schoolboy, and at last said, "Yes, I did, and that's why I don't want to see it again."

"Why not?"

"Why! why should I go hunting after sorrows? I've got enough already with my cold and my corns."

"But there's as much wit as pathos in it; some parts must have made you laugh—now, did they not?"

"Yes, they did; and I don't want either to laugh or to cry. I want just to be quiet here with you and Jessy."

"Now I'm sure, from what you say, the Lady of Lyons did make you cry."

"Well, and don't you think I'm ashamed— I, a middle-aged man (the girls smiled)—to be laughing like a school-boy one moment and crying like a school-girl the next?" "I'll tell you what," said Lucy, " you have no reason to be ashamed, for I never respected you so much as now I find you did so."

Burridge shot out of his spectacles some green rays of triumph at Jessy. "Well; good bye," he said, "I'll try to call to-morrow." Then, as he reached the door, he turned back: "Lucy," he said, "I am half inclined, after all, to come in at half-price."

"Half-price!" said Lucy. "Oh! how can you think about price, Mr. Burridge, when you might enjoy so priceless a pleasure as that of hearing one who is at once a poet, a consummate actor, and a gentleman, embody so noble a conception."

"Ah! well, I don't understand all this enthusiasm; but I'll perform Hamlet for you some day, and, I think, you'll own you never saw Macready do anything at all like it."

"Oh! I am sure of that," said Lucy: "but do go to the play to-night?"

"Well," said Burridge, "as you, Jessy,

seem to wish it as well as Lucy," (poor Jessy had remained in silent dismay,) "I'll just go home to my dinner, and bathe my feet, and put on some warm lamb's-wool stockings, and another flannel-waistcoat, for fear of taking more cold. And then I'll come back and take tea with you, and go. So now I'm sure I've pleased you both:" and he hobbled off.

"Yes," said Jessy, "by this short respite.

Oh, Lucy! what have you done? Well, I shall go and take a turn in the square—it is a wonder they are not returned!"

Poor Jessy! all day she had been sighing for freedom — for Hyde Park—for the power of seeing how closely Delamere rode by Aurelia's side—of guessing, from his look and attitude, what he was saying. The heart is like a child with the berries of the Deadly-Night-shade; striving for, sporting with, feeding on poisons. Ah! how often throughout Mr. Burridge's interminable visit, had she wished she were roaming by the blue waters of

the Serpentine, to catch a distant glimpse of Delamere! Yet what was he to her? He! a proud (perhaps conceited) fashionable. He! evidently attracted by, if not actually in love with, Aurelia. Aurelia the well-born! the beautiful!—What to him was the dependant, slighted Jessica Thornton?—What was he to her?

## CHAPTER IV.

Captain Delamere had not done Jessica justice in calling her a moderately pretty woman—to those who knew her, she seemed more than pretty; but she was rather below the middle size, and slightly made: generally pale, and without the least pretension to any thing shewy in her appearance. At a distance she produced no effect, for her complexion, though very delicate, had no brilliancy; and her features, though soft and feminine, were neither strictly Grecian nor Roman. Her chief beauty consisted in her hair, which was of a rare golden tint, and in her very blue eyes, which by some strange chance had long dark lashes.

No one who saw them together for the first time would have noticed Jessica by Aurelia's side, yet no one lived with them long without preferring the face of Jessica.

When she was happy (which was very seldom) her countenance was one of such innocent and almost childish gaiety, that the heart felt a sort of repose in looking at her; and when she was inspired by any enthusiastic feeling, her face brightened into an intellectual beauty, beside which Aurelia's dazzling complexion, and perfect features, seemed like a splendid piece of wax-work.

But Jessica's was a forlorn situation, and though naturally of a buoyant nature, she had begun latterly to feel more than ever how desolate it was. Her cheeks were often unusually pale, and her eyes as often red and heavy, so that Lady Vernon occasionally remarked to Aurelia that Jessica was fast becoming positively plain. Then too, poor Jessy had no foreign aid of ornament; which, however poets

may affect to despise it, is, when judiciously chosen, most conducive to beauty.

She had nothing to wear but what Lady Vernon chose to purchase for her: but then Sir William generally insisted that there should be no marked difference made between his daughters and his niece. So Lady Vernon, who had sometimes seen Jessy when becomingly dressed look dangerously pretty, managed to make Sir William's own commands the ruin of her appearance. She was very particular in selecting for Aurelia whatever best became her style of beauty, and then, with great apparent impartiality, would purchase similar articles for Jessy, to whom they were of course perfectly unsuited.

As to Lucy, she was a delicate lady-like girl, with black hair and good eyes, but no pretensions to beauty; one of those girls who look what is called "nice" and nothing more. No style of dress could make a beauty of Lucy, and she never cared what she wore.

Now Lady Vernon had discovered that dif-

ferent shades of yellow were of all colours the most becoming to Aurelia, and the most disfiguring to Jessy.

Aurelia, with her black hair and softly brilliant complexion, never looked so well as in a hat of pale yellow satin, or at a ball in primrose-coloured crape—gold ornaments became her beyond all others—and all her most costly and becoming dresses were yellow, orange, or scarlet. If she had a white dress, it was trimmed with yellow ribbons or yellow flowers. If Lady Vernon bought her a wreath, it was either of gold tinsel or of yellow roses.

But poor Jessy! Nothing could be devised more écrasant to Jessy, with her golden hair and pale complexion, than the yellow dresses, bonnets, scarfs, shawls and trimmings which Lady Vernon was wont pompously to confer, saying,—"I have bought so and so for Aurelia; and I have made it a point of conscience to purchase a similar one for you, Jessica. It is Sir William's wish as well as mine, to make as little

difference between you as possible." And Jessy was obliged to appear grateful that she was disfigured as much as possible; for she had good taste, and a woman's instinct in finding out what became her. But Jessy was of a simple unsuspecting nature; and though it had struck her that every thing was chosen with the view of embellishing Aurelia, she never suspected the ulterior and less excusable wish of disfiguring herself. Yet it prevailed in every thing. Long consultations with the mantua-maker were held to devise dresses that suited Aurelia's tall queen-like form; and then poor Jessy's mignonne figure was encumbered with flounces. falls, frills, folds, and furbelows. The coiffeur was always ordered to make no difference ; and often Jessy's eyes filled with tears as she saw him braiding away her beautiful bright ringlets, which peculiarly became her, to braid them à la Grecque, or à la Grisi, or in any style suited to Aurelia, to whom, in fact, any capricious head-dress she adopted was becoming.

There had been times when Jessy had resisted, and successfully; when, after the hair-dresser was gone, she had let down her long curls, and baved Aurelia's cold surprise, and Lady Vernon's anger; but those were days when she was in better health and higher spirits. When in her new character, as Sir William's grown apand introduced niece, she felt she had a right to assert herself; but latterly, having unfurtunately offended her aunt, some words of painful and mysterious import had been dropped. which Lady Vernon had afterwards begged her to forget, but which were ever present to her mind! Lady Vernon had said, "Take care, Jessica Thornton, as it is Sir William's pleasure to call you—you may yet live to wonder at my extreme condescension in suffering you to remain here."

Jessy had implored Lady Vernon, when she was calm, to tell her what her dark hint meant. Lady Vernon declared Jessy had misunderstood her. Jessy asserted that she had not; and de-

clared that she would apply to her uncle for an explanation. To her great surprise the proud Lady Vernon wept and entreated, said it would occasion a serious quarrel, and begged Jessy's pardon. The affair appeared to pass away; but it had never quite faded from Jessy's memory. Often, when any one looked coldly on her, it recurred to her. Often, in a sleepless night, she repeated the words to herself. Often she formed plans (it is so easy to plan at night -so difficult to execute in the morning) for leaving her uncle's house, for shaking off a dependance so painful to her, for supporting herself by her own rare talents; and she had almost matured a scheme to this effect, when a strong feeling of interest in Captain Delamere, a feeling which she mistook at first for curiosity, and then for friendship, (common mistakes,) entirely banished from her mind any idea of leaving a place where he paid an almost daily visit; but this interest was a source of no happiness. If he ever seemed to distinguish her by a momentary attention, she thought of Lady Vernon's words—of Aurelia's surpassing beauty—of his evident homage; and then she looked at her own pale cheeks and tearful eyes, and asked herself that question, we have all in our turn asked too, "Why—ah! why—was I born?"

Yet Jessy was naturally the merriest creature that ever made a fire-side cheerful, or a country house gay; and even now, depressed as she was at times, often her buoyant spirit would rise, and Lady Vernon would look at her with cold and disapproving surprise, as some bright sally or original thought drew Delamere's attention, from a studied glance or practised grace of Aurelia, to the gay laugh or deep interest of Burridge, Lucy, and the few who dared to shew an interest in Jessy; while this sort of cold wonder and spiteful disapproval of Lady Vernon's face, had more effect in checking Jessy's mirth, and crushing her spirit, than any open scoldings or rebukes

could have had. Poor Corinne says,—"Le visage humain exerce un grand pouvoir sur le cœur humain; et quand vous lisez sur ce visage une désapprobation secrète, elle vous inquiête toujours, en dépit de vous-même." Still Jessy was ashamed of this thraldom, and tried to shake it off; and often the wish not to appear awed by her aunt, led her to talk and jest, when she would have preferred to hang her head and weep.

Jessy had returned from her cold and lonely walk in the square before Aurelia came home, escorted by Delamere, and accompanied by Mrs. Winter and Dempster, who then took their leave. The Vernons dined hastily, and Jessy heard Aurelia say to her mother, at the door of her dressing room, "Captain Delamere is coming, mamma, to take tea here at six, and he is going to the play with us. Is my dress come home?"

"Yes; and Lucy's and Jessy's too. They look very stylish; and to you I am sure it

will be very becoming. Put on your gold feromère and ear-rings, and have your hair brided."

Jessy, with a flutter of anxiety not very common to her, opened the hen-coop-looking milliner's basket covered with black oil-skin in which her new dress was.

It was of a snuff-colour!!!....

A new fashion had just been brought from Paris, where what is becoming never disputes the palm with what is fashionable. Lady Vernon, in the course of a morning's lounge at her milliner's with Aurelia, had discovered that this colour, so hideous in itself, was peculiarly becoming to her daughter. There is a sort of triumph in looking well in what is disfiguring to others; and Lady Vernon, though she could ill afford it, ordered three dresses of this frightful but fashionable hue. She knew, of course, that nothing could be more unsuited to Jessy than the silk, and the manner in which it was to be made; but the more unbe-

coming it was to her, the more striking would be Aurelia's superiority. As to Lucy, she would look elegant in it, and that was all she could ever look in any thing.

Jessica took her dress out of the box, and looked at it with dismay; she held it before her, and ran to the glass; the colour made her hair, and to her excited fancy, even her skin, look of its own hideous hue. She tried it on-worse and worse! it was so full-so large: it not only destroyed her face, but ruined her pretty figure. Jessy did what for a heroine was quite out of character; she tore it off-tossed it from her-and "wiped away a tear." Though Lady Vernon had said nothing about it, and even appeared to intend it as a delicate surprise, Jessy knew, by its being placed ready for her, she was as much ordered to wear it, as if she had been desired to do so in so many words; but she possessed a spirit, and it was roused. "I will not look a fright tonight," she said. "He shall not always see in me nothing but a foil for Aurelia." She took from her drawer a white muslin dress, picked out its yellow lining, and stripped off its yellow ribbons.

Lady Vernon's maid, Flounce, came in. "If you please, Miss, my lady says, the Miss Vernons is going to wear their beautiful new snuff-colour silks, and their 'air ha la greasy, with a gold chain put twice round their 'eads, Miss; and my lady, Miss, has sent you up this 'ere hexcellent himitation for your 'ead, Miss; and if you're ready, Miss, I can braid your 'air."

"No, I thank you; I will arrange my hair myself. Send the housemaid to fasten my dress: are the young ladies ready?"

"They're putting the finishing touches to themselves, Miss," replied Flounce, who was very fine in her way. "And my lady is down stairs; and Captain Delamere and Mr. Burridge is arrived, Miss: Captain Delamere, Miss, in such a hexquisite new wis-a-wee, and Mr. Burridge, Miss, in such a despicable old wehicle,—a street cab, Miss, which he has ordered to vait, Miss, observing, probable one of the ladies would go in it with him, Miss. I'm sure, Miss, no lady, Miss, (nor, to be candid,) no lady's maid, Miss, would be mean herself to be seen in such a hobsolete hold wehicle; but there it vaits, Miss, quite a high sore in the square; and Mr. Burridge, Miss, have already had a great frekard with the driver, Miss—a very low-lived wretch, Miss."

"That will do, Flounce; send Susan directly."

"Yes, Miss. Lor, how lovely that snuffcolour silk do look, Miss! I heard Miss Aurelia say, that it makes a fury in Paris, Miss."

Jessy smiled, when she remembered it had made something like one in England. Flounce disappeared.

Jessy quickly arranged her beautiful hair to her own taste; and, with Susan's assistance, dressed herself very becomingly in her white dress.

"I'm sure, Miss, I never seed you look so becoming," observed Susan; and Lucy thought so too. When she reached the drawing room, she found Lady Vernon, Captain Delamere, and Mr. Burridge. Lady Vernon was all smiles, blonde, satin, and swansdown; but a cloud seemed to steal from her face over her whole person, as Jessy came forward, and the full light of the fire and the lamps shone on her graceful form and sweet face.

"Jessica," she said, trying to wreathe the sword in myrtles, "there is some mistake, my love! Did you not find a new dress in your room? Your cousins are wearing theirs—the newest fashion—quite the rage!"

"A snuff-coloured silk, you mean," said Jessy.

"Yes, my love. I hoped, as I meant it as an agreeable surprise, you would have paid me the compliment of wearing it. There is yet time to do so, dearest." "There's no time for changing dresses, Lady Vernon, particularly when one has expensive carriages waiting at the door," said Burridge, "if we're to have any tea before we go; and if we haven't, I shall fall asleep directly I get there; and when I do, I know I snore so loud, you'll hear nothing. I can't help it. I've been told I always do when I sleep; and I believe I always did, 'and always shall.'"

Lady Vernon glanced at Burridge with supreme contempt; for he had turned away from her to stare at Jessy. She softly said, "I should like to see you in your snuffcoloured silk, dear!"

"My dear Lady Vernon," said Delamere, who had been looking at Jessy with alarming admiration, "do for once sacrifice the fashionable to the becoming. Compare that hideous invention of a distorted French fancy snuff-colour, to that delicate virgin white; and I am sure you will be glad Miss Thornton

has had taste and spirit enough to make so good a selection. No complexion can stand against that frightful colour."

"But it is not merely the colour, aunt," said Jessy, smiling brightly: "as if to overwhelm me quite, Mademoiselle Victorine has made my dress large enough for a giantess—it is quite unendurable in its present state." And she proceeded to the tea-table, at which, through the indolence of others, she generally presided.

"Well, now, I don't think snuff-colour by any means so unbecoming," said Burridge, going up to Jessy, and throwing his coat wide open. "There, look at me! my tailor persuaded me to have a snuff-coloured waistcoat, and now I don't see anything amiss in it, do you?"

Captain Delamere, who sometimes took a pleasure in "drawing out" Burridge, approached him, examined the waistcoat through an eye-glass, asked who made it, turned Burridge round to look at the cut of his coat, and ended by saying, "Really, Mr. Burridge,

I'm half inclined to get a snuff-coloured waistcoat myself, it suits you so well: but then there are some complexions that nothing can disfigure."

Burridge shot one of his triumphant glances at Jessy, and said, "I bought the silk myself at Shoolbred's, and I took it myself to my tailor, who lives in Little Arundel street, Strand; and now, what do you think it came to? you see what it is,"

"I only know Storey would charge me six guineas for it."

"It cost me, lining, tape, and all, exactly twelve shillings."

"Where did you say your tailor lives; and what is his name?"

"His name's Macbotcher; and a very worthy, hard-working man he is: but you must buy the silk yourself, and make a bargain with him,—else, he's a Scotchman, 'a word to the wise;' and he'll keep the remnants, if you don't ask him for them; and very useful they are, in case you want a button covered or so; and he's apt to spin out the bill, too, if you don't keep an eye on him. You know my black silk waistcoat, Jessy? well, just because I made no bargain, I never got a scrap of the silk back, and he charged me eight shillings for the mere making. However, you'll find him in Little Arundel street, which runs out of Arundel street, Strand—Macbotcher; it's on the door; and if you use my name he'll take as much pains as if it were for myself."

Jessy had much difficulty in repressing her laughter, at the idea of the super-exquisite Captain Delamere, a man who had actually given his name to a collar and a cab, seeking out a Macbotcher, in Little Arundel street, Strand, haggling with him for a sixpence, and bargaining for remnants to mend worn buttons: but at this moment Flounce threw open the door, and, herself laden with cloaks, boas, and tippets, ushered in Aurelia.

Captain Delamere sprang forward to welcome

her. He had never seen her look so triumphantly beautiful, and yet she wore a snuff-coloured dress.

"Ah! I recant all I have said," he exclaimed to the delighted Lady Vernon. "Henceforth this is my badge;" and he picked up a small satin rosette, which had fallen from Aurelia's sleeve, and placed it in his button, à la légion d'honneur.

When Aurelia entered, Mr. Burridge, while rudely pushing his cup to be filled for the third time, was saying to Jessica, "After all, I don't think that young Delamere is such a puppy; it's astonishing how he grows upon one; it's his confounded tailor that makes such a coxcomb of him; when he employs Macbotcher he'll be quite a different thing—More cream; and, wait a minute, I'll drink half of this, and then you can fill it up again."

But Jessica heeded him not; she too was struck with Aurelia's beauty. She looked at Delamere, and she read in his eyes a something

that made her heart sink within her. Aurelia's black hair, braided simply over her fine white forehead, and bound by a gold chain of exquisite workmanship-her eyes glistening with the selfcomplacency which is so like amiability in expression, so little like it in feeling—her delicate fush of gratified beauty, which might so easily be construed into the blush of modesty-Ah! how could the passionate admirer of beauty resist such charms as these? Then, too, the dress formed as it was with consummate taste and skill -had in its quaint colour something stylish and unique; and soon the triumph of amiability was added to that of beauty, for Lady Vernon kindly pressed Aurelia's hand, and said, " I am much pleased, my dear girl, that you preferred wearing an ugly colour to disappointing me. If that dress had made you absolutely plain in others' eyes, the motive of your wearing it would make you lovely in mine. Ah! and here comes my Lucy. Thank you, my dear, for wearing my ill-chosen present; another beauty from the blushing triumphant Aurelia, whom Delamere was wrapping up with a care increased tenfold by the interest her apparent respect for her mother's feelings had excited. An ardent man so easily believes in the amiability of a beauty; he is so ready to fancy high thoughts enshrined in a noble brow, and sensibility in deep blue eyes.—Alas! alas!

Poor Jessy!—as Burridge, with his awkwardness and pushes encumbered her with help,
she folded her cloak over a sinking heart, and
wished herself wrapped in snuff-colour, sable,
or, better still, that the clod of the valley were
lying lightly on that poor heart which no
human being had ever yet appreciated or under
stood.

No efforts of Burridge's could induce any one to share his despicable old vehicle; so he got into it himself, very sulkily, and had another "frekard" with the driver at the doors of Covent Garden Theatre. time I shall not be misled by Victorine's passion for 'la grande mode;' I shall consult you all: but I am really flattered that you have preferred wearing those dresses to hurting my feelings."

How humbled did poor Jessy feel. How paltry, how vain, thought she, must Delamere think me. Burridge had sidled up to Aurelia, who had placed herself where she could steal a glance at herself in a mirror; and, throwing open his coat, as if challenging comparison, he said, "It's a pity we're going into a private box; this colour is certainly very becoming. Your dress is just the same shade as my waistcoat, —we look all of a piece."

"Come, my dear girls," said Lady Vernon,

"put on your cloaks. Jessy must carry off the
palm of beauty to-night; and yet I feel proud
of my snuff-coloured daughters."

Poor Jessy, pale and abashed, casting down her eyes to conceal the tears that filled them, did not seem likely to carry off the palm of beauty from the blashing triumphant America. whom Delamere was wrapping up with a more increased tenfold by the interest her apparent respect for her mother's feetings had excited. An ardent man so easily believes in the interest blity of a beauty; he is so ready to famey high thoughts enshrined in a noble herew, and sensibility in deep blue eves.—Alass aloss

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## CHAPTER V.

"Who has not felt his sinking heart confess
The might, the majesty of loveliness?"
BYRON.

Lady Vernon insisted that the three girls should sit in front, and soon every opera-glass was levelled at Aurelia; people in the neighbouring boxes pressed, almost rudely, forward to look at her; for, however phlegmatic the English may be in some things, in gratifying their curiosity they are the most energetic folks in the world: a young lordling in the stage-box, nobly engaged in flirting with an actress, who was not to come on till the afterpiece, fixed his eye-glass, with more skill than any one would have given him credit for

in his lack-lustre eye, threw himself into a lounging attitude, and devoted himself entirely to watching the new beauty; while the lively actress aforesaid alternately fanned, scolded, pelted him with flowers, sprinkled him with "bouquet superfine des fleurs de Paradis," flirted through the gilt trellis-work with an old be-rouged and be-wigged actor in the next box, and ogled by turns all the men in the house.

The triumphant Aurelia, her colour deepening, and her eyes growing even brighter with the delight of her heart, at first engrossed all the attention of Delamere, who felt a sort of pride in the marked attention, the appealing glances, and the smiling whispers of this "cynosure of neighbouring eyes." But as the play proceeded, and the interest deepened, his thoughts would wander to the stage, and he felt almost vexed when he marked how little the beautiful Aurelia seemed to feel the thrilling pathos of the poetry, or the startling interest of the drama. During the most touching

expressions of Claude's intense passion, he saw her put her hand repeatedly to her head to smooth a braid, or to feel if her chain was exactly in the right place; then she would look from the stage into the adjoining boxes, or clasp her bracelets, or arrange her mantilla, or look deliberately at her beautiful rings and still more beautiful hand. Delamere was himself too deeply interested in the performance to pay much attention to this; still it teazed and disappointed him. When suddenly, in that harrowing scene where Paulina's parents are about to take her away from him who has "so loved, so wronged her;" and Claude, in that farewell, which it would seem sacrilege to curtail, exclaims, "Mother, your blessing! I shall see you again - a better man than a prince,\* a man who has bought the right to high thoughts by brave deeds. And

<sup>\*</sup> To the very few who do not know the story, it may be necessary to say, that Claude, in a fit of phrenzied vengeance, had consented to personate a prince to win Paulins.

thou! thou! so wildly worshipped, so guiltily betrayed, - all is not yet lost! - for thy memory, at least, must be mine till death. If I live, the name of him thou hast once loved shall not rest dishonoured; if I fall amidst the carnage and the roar of battle, my soul will fly back to thee, and Love shall share with Death my last sigh! More—more would I speak to thee—to pray—to bless! But no! when I am less unworthy, I will utter it to Heaven! I cannot trust myself to-Your pardon, sir [turning to the father]—they are my last words—farewell!"—Just as he ceased, before Paulina had started from her father's arms, Jessica, half beguiled by the admirable acting into a belief of the reality of the scene, murmured, passionately clasping her hands, "Oh, Heaven! She will not let him go! No, no! not alone!" Then suddenly recalled to herself by a touch of Aurelia's fan, her "La, Jessy!" and a most indignant "How very extraordinary!" from Lady Vernon, she leant back, and tried to hide her tears with

At Jessy's exclamation, Delamere, almost hoping it had proceeded from Aurelia, had turned from the stage to the ladies, to see Aurelia calmly adjusting her brooch and her scarf, while Jessy was trying to conceal the tears which would force themselves through her slender fingers. At that moment he almost despised the cold and soulless beauty,-he almost felt that he could have knelt to the poor, weeping, and dependent protégée; but just at that moment Burridge, perceiving Jessica's distress, and fancying, from her hiding her face in her hands, that she had forgotten or lost her handkerchief, after wiping away a very suspicious looking mist from his own spectacles, pushed the crumpled old red horror towards Jessy, saying, "Wipe your eyes with this, Jessy, and don't be such a simpleton!"

There was something so irresistibly ludicrous in the action—something so like the style in

which a he-bear would have offered a similar service to a lady-bearess, that Delamere could not restrain a smile; and when Jessica, quite unconscious of Burridge's kind offer, glanced timidly round in search of her reticule, and stole a furtive glance at Delamere, in the hope that he had not noticed her agitation, she saw him vainly trying to repress his laughter. Of course her impression was, that he was laughing at her—at her childish, or perhaps (worse still) her affected agitation; and when he kindly handed her a vinaigrette, and whispered a hope that she did not feel unwell, she, still indignant at his detected smile, rejected it coldly, and answered with a stiffness which completely chilled the interest he had begun to take in her. "How strange it is!" thought he, "that girl appears quite to hate me! and yet she seems to have some taste and feeling !-I shall never trouble myself about her again—a contemptuous little puss!"

Captain Delamere was a spoiled child of the

world and its women; he could not reconcile to himself the discovery that Jessica had taste and feeling—and not for him!—he was piqued, and turned to flirt with Aurelia, who smiled so sweetly, and looked so admiringly, that he forgot how little she had attended to the play; while when the curtain rose again, having a hint from Lady Vernon, who had noticed, not without alarm, Delamere's interest in Jessy's tears, Aurelia seemed deeply moved, and at the beautiful and highly-wrought close, buried her fine face in her fine cambric hand-kerchief; and the Captain said to himself, "She has as much feeling as beauty!"

Meanwhile Mr. Burridge, who had by no means forgiven the slight offered to his red cotton pocket-handkerchief, announced his intention of going home to bed. "Good night to ye, Miss Jessy," he said; "you'll accept my handkerchief the next time I offer it to ye!

—Good night, Lady Vernon, I'm going to bed; I shall take a bason of hot gruel, and put a

piece of flannel round my head, and perhaps I may take two of Morrison's pills, or a dose of James's powders.—Good night to ye, Aurelia; good night, Lucy;—good night, Captain Delamere—remember his name's Macbotcher, Little Arundel street, and you may use my name!"

The afterpiece was lively and well acted, but, compared with the thrilling interest of the play, it seemed tame and poor. Delamere observed this, and, as all agreed that it wearied them, went in search of the carriage. He led the triumphant Aurelia through the crowds who pressed forward to see her, and heard the murmured "how very beautiful!" of all around. In the press they came suddenly upon Dempster and Mrs. Winter, who had just emerged from another private box. Dempster had resolved on going to the play, because Delamere went, and considered himself not a little slighted that he had not been included in his party: through some strange perversion of his narrow mind, he attributed this slight to the powerless Jessy, whom he hated for the Ann Boleyn affair of the morning; he had moreover a purblind notion that she admired Delamere: so he said, loud enough for her to hear, "How brilliant Miss Vernon looks: by Jove! you're a happy dog, Delamere. Poor little Jessy," and here he affected to whisper, "looks, as Mrs. Winter says, quite la bergère delaissée."—Jessy heard every word, and Dempster was richly avenged.

"I cannot but compliment you on Aurelia's looks to-night, my dear Lady Vernon," said one of the Miss Eldertons, a toady in Mrs. Winter's train; "never saw such a contrast in my life as between her and her cousin! How can any one call that girl pretty?—I beg your pardon, I'm very frank, you know;—I can't flatter you about her, though she is your niece; I must speak my mind. Could you give Bab a place in your carriage? Poor dear girl! Mrs. Winter has been so kind as to bring us all, as she had a very large box; and now young Dempster's got such a cold he can't go on the box;

piece of flannel round my head, and perhaps I may take two of Morrison's pills, or a dose of James's powders.—Good night to ye, Aurelia; good night, Lucy;—good night, Captain Delamere—remember his name's Macbotcher, Little Arundel street, and you may use my name!"

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proof complexions: they had never looked very young, and people began to think that they would never look very old! They themselves saw no difference in their faces and figures, so they made none in their dress; they still wore white muslin frocks ! In a land of liberty, what should prevent them ?- They found no physical impediment to their wreathing white roses round their heads; they had plenty of hair! and, if they themselves were aware that it was slightly grizzled, they very sensibly convinced both themselves and each other, that no one else could possibly suspect it; they were bound together by a strong esprit de corps; were all great boasters and great toadies; called each other "the girls," and, to their credit be it spoken, contrived, by secretly giving lessons in music, and by little excusable beggings and manœuvrings, to live on in apparent respectability, and free from debt, upon little more than a hundred pounds a year!

"My dearest Mrs. Winter," said the eldest Miss Elderton, who was famed for her marvellous volubility, going playfully up to Mrs. Winter, "Good news! I have got Lady Vernon to take Bab home in her carriage, so Mr. Dempster need not go on the box."

"I never intended he should," said Mrs. Winter, coldly.

"There, do you hear that, you spoilt boy! you pet of the petticoats! I declare now how much you do remind me of my cousin,—no, my uncle's cousin,—no, let me see,—how was it? He married Lord—no, no, she, my aunt, married Lord Foplington, and he was her son. Well, you are so like him! his picture hangs up in the great hall at Foplington. When we were all little tiny things, so high, we used to be so afraid of it, because he was hanged for treason—no, no, broke his neck out hunting: he was such a fine, noble fellow, though, and had broken many hearts before he broke his own neck."

"I hope Mr. Dempster will not prove like him in that," said the delicately rouged widow, with a sentimental glance from under her blue crape opera-hat.

"La! my dear Mrs. Winter, you are so droll! Well now, I declare, to think of the turn you give things! as I often say to the girls, I could laugh for hours together, only thinking over the things you say. You're just like my great aunt, Lady Betterton, in that!"

"Oh! dear, Dempster," said the lady, "do you think I can be like Miss Elderton's great aunt?"

"There now, ha! ha! I declare it is too much for one; I must tell Bab that!"

"More like her great niece," whispered Dempster.—Miss Elderton heard, but she did not heed. She had contracted an habit of pocketing whatever she could get, and, among other articles, occasionally an affront.

She went up to Mrs. Winter, and playfully putting her cloak over her shoulder, said:—
"Cover up her beautiful naughty shoulder; it's a great deal too pretty for every one to be

staring at, and it's not only as white but as cold as snow! There, cover it up. Go to by-bye! Naughty little shoulder, peeping out to make conquests!"

Mrs. Winter, who was very proud of her white shoulder, and had purposely displayed it before Dempster, pushed aside the cloak and Miss Elderton's hand; and, very much out of humour, as she saw Captain Delamere, whom she had long angled for, apparently caught by Aurelia, said, "Elderton, I can't take you home to supper to-night, I can only have Dempster: he's quiet, and you have such spirits, when I've this migraine you quite destroy me."

"Oh! but I'll be as quiet as a little mouse
—do take me home to supper!—Do take her
own Elderton, please! I'll be like little Tom
Horner,

' I'll sit in a corner, Eating my Christmas pie.'

Do!—come!—She looks too pretty to be so vol. 1.

cross. If she's got a head-ache, she wants her own Elderton to get her salts, and eau de Cologne, and ring the bell, and keep the dogs quiet, and prevent the men from teasing her, and write answers to her billets-doux.—Come! say poor Elderton shall go home with her, or she'll think she's angry."

"Well, then, you and Dempster may come, no one else—tell them so."

Miss Elderton undertook to do this; and reflecting how nearly her want of tact had lost her a supper, resolved to weigh her words well in future, and never to cover up a coquette's white shoulder again.

"Dempster," said Mrs. Winter, "how is all going on at the Vernon's? is Delamere caught?—caged for ever, or only hovering round the snare?"

"Oh! I think he's decidedly caught. No wonder; she's a deuced fine girl!"

"He's a great fool! as he'll find out some day—I believe: he might do so well! But your geniuses are always taken in by pretty idiots.

That girl hasn't an idea that she doesn't imbibe from her cunning manœuvring old mamma. They're a bad set altogether, those Vernons. Sir William a gambler, dreadfully involved; and some stories about him are getting abroad, which go far to prove him something worse-Lucy, an ugly blue stocking-Aurelia, a handsome noodle -Mark, the best among them, for he has some taste, (he had been in her train,) half ruined already-and that little Jessica, whom I once condescended to notice out of pity, the most obstinate, impracticable, ungrateful little creature!-No one knows who she is, too. As for her being Sir William's niece, that I'll never believe! She may be his daughter: but if she were, I should think Lady Vernon wouldn't notice her; perhaps she's her own-I sometimes fancy a likeness between them. Don't you, Elderton?"

"Oh! yes," answered Elderton, who had not been so attentive as she should have been, "the very image of Sir William." "No-que vous étes bête, Elderton?—of Lady Vernon," said Mrs. Winter.

"Yes, of Lady Vernon," said Dempster.

"Well, now, do you know, I think her exceedingly like both," said Miss Elderton.

And Mrs. Winter, having thus destroyed, as far as in her lay, the fair fame of a whole family, and Jessy having been decided to be like two people as unlike each other as two people could possibly be, namely, Sir William and Lady Vernon,—the amiable party, with the addition of Miss Dorothea and Miss Lavinia Elderton, entered Mrs. Winter's elegant carriage. Miss Elderton reaped the reward of her toadying in a recherché petit souper, and "the girls" were taken home by the sulky coachman to their cheerless lodging in the New Road, and went supperless to bed.

## CHAPTER VI.

We have not yet introduced Sir William Vernon. The fact is he was seldom to be found at home; and abroad, alas! he frequented haunts where we hope our reader would not be very likely to encounter him: he was one of the invisible London husbands, rarely seen in public with his wife, and so rarely found at his own table or his own fire-side, that when he did chance to be there his presence had a chilling, awing effect on all his family. Yet invisible as he was where he ought to have been seen, he was visible enough at certain fashion-

able gambling-houses, and, in short, wherever play was high and morality low! It was strange, that a man who practised no one virtue, and performed no one duty, should have contrived to hold the despotic sway over his family which Sir William Vernon did. It proved the truth of Madame de Stael's assertion, " c'est par nos défauts que nous gouvernons." He was stern, cold, inscrutable, haughty, and a little sarcastic: still strikingly handsome, although more than fifty years of age; and though dissipation had left some slight traces on his pale yet perfect features, his figure had preserved all its early symmetry and grace. Seldom is a fond husband's most earnest entreaty attended to, as was his brief and cold command. Seldom does a fond wife, fearful of having exceeded, in her expenditure, the intentions of a trusting husband, tremble, as did Lady Vernon tremble, when she laid her bills before Sir William, or asked of him, who squandered thousands on himself, a small sum for his family. Yet Lady

Vernon had been an heiress. At thirty-five, in defiance of her friends, she had married Sir William Vernon, then the Adonis of the day, and about twenty-three years of age. She had been, nay, was still at the time of her marriage, extremely handsome-an heiress and a beauty! She had refused half the noble marrying spendthrifts of her day: but though people whispered behind her back that her sun was setting, and an old plain-spoken aunt told her that she was outstanding her market, and " after going through the wood would pick up but a crooked stick at last," her glass and her lovers told her her star was still in its zenith: and perhaps she would still have wielded for some years longer the golden sceptre of an heiress, had she not fallen desperately in love with Sir William Vernon, who, being as desperately-not in love, but in debt-proposed, and was accepted.

She called, in high triumph, to introduce him to the old prophetic aunt. "Well," she asked,

when they were alone, as she pointed to her husband's stately figure, while he wandered listlessly through the old aunt's grounds, wondering whether he should ever have the power of converting the acres into cash, "well, aunt, have I picked up the crooked stick at last?"

"Ah!" replied her relative, "it's all very fine outwardly—he's straight and fine to the eye: I only hope there may be no crook in the heart, child."

In time Lady Vernon felt the truth of her aunt's misgiving, but she felt it as a vain egotist feels such things, it soured her to others, and yet subdued her to him. It would have broken a feeling trusting heart, but Lady Vernon had no such brittle inconvenient thing about her. She herself was artful and selfish; but then she was vain and weak. He was artful and selfish; but then he was proud and resolute. Some years after their marriage he took her to a boarding-school to see a little girl, whose birth he told her, in haughty confidence,

was enveloped in mystery; but when I was his will to call the child of a deceased involunt who had married and died abroad. He added that when the girl should be grown up it was insintention to introduce her with his own language. Lady Vernon took an immediate during ters. Lady Vernon took an immediate during to the little pale maiden, who fixed her impresenting blue eyes on her with a securing which added a natural finals to her arminal bloom—but she founded her before for William, and gave her a great meless gintering mentages to which she had taken a fixing herself.

This poor little girl was Jensen Thornton who was removed from school to senter beloved and regretted in all, till she was unexten years of age. In about two years, while Marcus, a year younger than herself was making the tour of Europe, and when Aurelia was unesteen, and Lucy eighteen, years of age. Later Vernon proposed to introduce them all. Then had arrived together in Berkeley-square some months before the London season sen in the

Aurelia still required music and dancing and French masters. Though not what is called regularly "out," they had been at several watering places; and had spent part of the previous season in town. Aurelia was expected to make a brilliant match; while Lucy was advised not to be "too particular." As for Jessy, Lady Vernon thought "some elderly man might perhaps take a fancy to her, as she was lively and cunning." But all were told they must play their cards well, as perhaps it might be their only season in town: since Sir William had hinted something about "retrenchment," and the "Continent."

#### CHAPTER VII.

It was a remarkable thing, that the only member of Sir William Vernon's family (except his son) who did not absolutely fear him, was the one most gentle and sensitive in all other respects—namely, Jessica! Aurelia would fly at his approach, to avoid being even a few minutes alone with him; and Lucy herself felt an uncomfortable awe in his presence. Perhaps this was partly owing to the fear of him which from childhood they had, with the quick instinct of children, detected in their mother. They had known her misrepresent and prevaricate, and

invent, to avoid owning the most trifling thing that might by possibility incur his displeasurethey had seen her turn pale when he frownedand, after any long conference with him, generally appear agitated, and in tears. Lucy, as the most sensible among them, had made some progress in conquering so abject and childish a feeling; but with Aurelia, as with her mother, the sentiment was a fixed one. With regard to Marcus, who was a noble, frank, generous fellow, he had never entertained, even in infancy, one particle of dread, either of his father or of any other living creature: he was bold even to rashness-caution, that most useful of organs, was not to be found in his phrenological development; and already he had reaped some of the bitter fruits of his imprudence in the shape of duns, debts, and difficulties. He made no secret of thishe told his father he was in debt-his father knocked him down-he got up again: said, " Father, you know I cannot strike you, therefore it is cowardly in you to strike me; were you not my father you would bitterly repent this morning's work—as it is, remember you have struck your son for squandering a few hundreds, while you yourself have squandered thousands and tens of thousands. I shall never return to your house till you have spologised for the insult you have offered me. If you want any thing of me, I shall be for the present at the Clarendon."

He left the house, and Sir William, recovering from his passion, reflected that though he did not want any thing of his son then, in a few months, when Marcus would be of age, he should indeed want his consent and cooperation in cutting off an entail: he therefore wrote kindly to him, asked for a list of his debts, and proposed that he should go on the Continent, out of the reach of his dangerous associates, until a cornetcy in some dragoon regiment could be procured for him.

Marcus took leave of his family, particularly of little Jessy, with great regret; and soon rushed into greater excesses abroad than he had indulged in at home.

Lady Vernon's fear of Sir William compelled her to be outwardly tolerably civil to his protégée; in return she generally exacted that every unusual request or unpleasant communication should be made to him by Jessica. To Mr. Burridge too, whom she could not endure for his rudeness and want of tact, she was compelled to appear cordial. She knew full well that Mr. Burridge, in spite of his lonely, unostentatious mode of life, and somewhat penurious habits, was rich, and highly connected. Although he had never asked any thing for himself, he had once done Sir William Vernon a great service—done it in a gruff uncouth manner; but still he had done it! It was with respect to something in the gift of his cousin the minister; an appointment which, in time of great need, Sir William Vernon had obtained through him. The office had since been done away with-but Burridge never forgot any

service he had ever rendered; and, lest the Vernous should do so, often reminded them of It was impolitic, inasmuch as it had the effect on Sir William of suggesting, that what Barridge had done once, Burridge might do spain. A lucrative appointment for himself, and a cornetcy for Marcus, he hoped yet to obtain through Burridge, and his cousin the minister. Therefore Lady Vernon knew she had better wase a slumbering tiger than offend Burridgeand Burridge was so easy to offend and so hard to conciliate. Aurelia, through fear of her father -Jessy, through kindness of heart-and Lucy from a mixture of both—joined their welcomes when he came with their regrets when he went, and reproaches when he stayed away: and thus this uncouth, surly, ill-bred creature, exercised considerable influence in the Vernon family; and, being naturally overbearing, censured this, abused that; took Aurelia, and, sometimes, even Lady Vernon herself, to task-asked Sir William questions which no one else would have asked

gued with Lucy—and bored death. Yet no one ever dre. "Not at home," to Mr. Burrid at all times, and in all weathe himself was not so constant a vie each others backs, Burridge cal a puppy, and Delamere called Bu bear of the Vernon Beauties.

### CHAPTER VIII.

Vernons into their carriage, at the doors of Covent Garden Theatre, went straight to his own home, an elegant bachelor's residence in Lower Grosvenor Street. The murmured plaudits of Aurelia's admirers were still buzzing in his ears; he still saw her bright farewell glance; he still felt the scarcely perceptible pressure of her hand at parting, and yet, even as he walked up and down his room, in the first delicious excitement of incipient love, unasked, uncourted—perhaps, unwelcome—came before him Jes-

sica, just as he had seen her at the play, leaning back in her chair, hiding her tears with her fair, small hand; or as she looked up, pale and fearful, after Burridge's elegant attention .- " I must study that girl's character a little," he said to himself; "she piques me-she excites my curiosity. And, now, to bed. Oh! I hope I shall dream of that divine Aurelia. Is she at this moment thinking of me? Perhaps she is kneeling in her virgin bower, her black tresses unbound, her magnificent eyes raised to Heaven, and my name trembling on the chiselled rubies of her lips! How exquisite she would look thus! Those perfect hands folded on a bosom worthy of Aphrodite herself! -I never saw her weep! What were tears in those wild blue eyes ?- I think one tear from her could break a thousand hearts !- Oh! if I were but sure she loved me!"

Delamere found on his dressing-table, lying amid the profusion of those glittering elegancies which adorn the toilet of a modern Sybarite, a billet breathing of Araby; he took it up, the hand was a woman's: he thought it was not quite new to him, but it was evidently written both with an attempt at disguise, and in great agitation.—It ran as follows:

"I must save you from a fate which you, of all men on earth, could least endure-an union with a soulless beauty! Before the dread of losing one I have loved so wildly and so long, all scruples suggested by womanhood and shame vanish. Osmond Delamere, I adore you!-I love you with the wild, impetuous love, which overwhelms all obstacles. Blind! blind as you are !- that I must use words to tell you I worship you! I, in whose eyes and on whose cheeks you might so long ago have read the fatal secret! And mine is the heart whose boundless devotion alone could content your exacting nature-mine, the intellect which alone could appreciate the brilliancy and depth of yours. And shall I see you throw yourself away on a creature without a heart or soul?

How soon the brightest beauty palls; and Aurelia Vernon's are the gaudy charms which, like those of a tulip bed, are the first to tire.-A few weeks, and in 'the blaze of this beauty, unchangingly bright,' love will fall asleep. And I-I love you so that I dread even the disappointment a rival will cause you !- Oh! Osmond, can you recal no glances bright for you alone-no cheeks where you can read rosy messages from the heart - no bosom that heaves with its burden of tenderness? Think -think awhile! You know, you must know whose wild love dictates these lines; and you will pause awhile before you put an eternal barrier between your heart and one that will yet break for you. Try this brilliant butterfly, this bright but scentless flower: introduce some admirers more wealthy and as well born as yourself, and see if she has one particle of real preference for you! Try her with some tale of poverty or disgrace, and then think how she, who would prefer beggary with you

to a throne without you, must shudder at the sacrifice you contemplate. Heaven guide you. Osmond!—if my words but make you passe, 'tis something. You shall hear from me again—perhaps yet see me at your feet—for what will not true love dare? Even your—but no, your heart will suggest the name."

"My heart is not so prophetic as she fancies! Who can it be? A woman of some mind, taste, feeling—nay, soul! The hand seems somewhat familiar to me; but then all women write so much alike," and he turned to a reservoir of glazed and scented notes of every delicate hue, which confirmed the observation. "Who can it be?" he again asked himself: "Jessica Thornton? Impossible!———She teems to hate me! and yet I have faccied something in her eyes and smile: but no! she is a timid girl—she would never dare! One so young, could not be so bold——Bold! that is a harsh word to apply to the devotion of a loving woman. I must watch her.—Who else can it

be? Lady Windermere? She is in love with Count de Mornay. She professes now to despise as much as she once loved me.-La Contessa? She cannot write English so fluently.-Any one of those husband-hunting Miss Ogletons-impossible! I might almost as well suspect the Eldertons themselves .- Mrs. Winter! -ha! that seems more probable: but no, there cannot be so much fire in that cold, worldly heart. And yet we elicit sparks from flints! But then hers has already come so often into contact with other flints like itself, that no fire can be left there.-I hope not; the love we cannot return may flatter our vanity, but it cannot satisfy our hearts. Yet she is a fine woman! Thirty-five or six-she cannot be more: but still-no, no, it cannot be Mrs. Winter: this letter breathes the warm energies of youth. Ah! well, time must decide: but the hint is not a bad one. I will delay making a formal proposal to that exquisite Aurelia. I had wished to secure her before the London

season brings swarms of coroneted butterfiles around my matchless flower; but vet if she did not prefer me to them all, if her heart could hesitate, what were she to me? Well did the poets make the Queen of Love and Bessay one, and I would rather give my heart for love without beauty, than for beauty without love. But why should she not love me? I will try her yet.-Jessica too is pretty, more than pretty; till Aurelia came, she looked most lovely. A man might love that Jessicaif Aurelia were not there! Well is as evidently a woman of taste and feeding ----And so thinking, Captain Delamere retired to those happy dreams which haunt the policy of a rich, courted, handsome elégant, who fazzies he has only to woo in order to win!

Osmond Delamere was eight-and-twenty—that age at which a man is perhaps the most engaging, since he has as yet lost no charm of youth, and has won a world of tact, experience, and *Part de plaire*. Delamere had

. TOUR CHEST AND . THE MARK HERE THE BEST Trettent. Bettig mer vo. unt eine grant. THE COURSE WILL . THE SEC MANUAL THERE, THE Record wit a line with in sing that yes WHEN THE I AM OR & THE THE THE PARTY. existent linguismen uns and though the world accounts to all and await in many: THE WINE IN THE WAY IN THE WAY minimizati de resul le mineral des AND F CUIT COLLEGE IN IN LAST IN MARKET unt meierne noun aniet at ingici bement he ime more measures and he whole engression and names was me at such salingestimens mit negent in tione about him. man a rare training for beauty of any kind) ac was won as much liked as admired. He tack a gradification. Was in the grands, and between him and an earliann there was only one small and somewhat sickly boy of seven years old. Yet he seemed to be even romantically attached to this little fragile cousin, and the little earl himself loved no one so well as his " own dear Osmond."

It was said Delamere's excessive care, and even skill, had more than once saved this child inadangerous illness; and worldlings could never understand how he could be so anxious for the life of one who stood between him and an ancient title with a splendid fortune. Perhaps the fear that he might ever wish him away, had made him cling more closely to him; he would so have despised himself, if, for any worldly advantage, he could have wished that little form stiff and cold, and those mild, languid eves, which sparkled so at his approach, closed for ever!-if he could have wished that mother desolate, who had but one on earth for whom she cared to live! And the Countess of Mandeville, that mother, who would scarcely trust her darling ever from her sight, gladly consigned him to Delamere whenever he wished it. The boy had a little pony to ride with his cousin.

The boy had a little pony to ride with his cousin. Sometimes he was allowed to spend days together with him at Delamere Park, and the

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child always returned more rosy and more happy from a visit to Delamere.

Delamere could be amusing even to a child, for everything interested him; he had that power of adapting himself to those around him which would have made the fortune of an aspirant, and that universal facility in creating and acquiring, which, had it been directed by chance or necessity into any one channel, would have made "a genius." But caprice, vanity, want of perseverance, those lighter stains the world ever leaves on all who pass through its ways, even if they are fortunate enough to escape those of deeper and more indelible dye, -these and these alone prevented Delamere from being a great man, instead of an intellectual and engaging idler. He loved reading, and by fits he had read much; but who, without a definite aim, reads steadily and long ?- When the sky is blue, and the birds carol merrily, and the student knows that there are bluer eyes watching, and merrier voices ready to welcome him ;-that, instead of poring over the magisterial arguments of another, with an uncomfortable feeling of inferiority in oneself, he could soon canter on a fleet steed to where his own lightest remark would be bailed as a matchless witticism;—ah! how soon is the book flung aside by a student like this! Yet even these occasional waves from the sea of knowledge, as he sometimes loitered by its shore, had flung some treasures on the memory; and these, added to his own highly original and creative fancy, made of him a poet, a painter, a musician, "everything by turns, but nothing long."

He would have been a first-rate performer on some one particular instrument, had he not tried all. As it was, on all he played tolerably, but only tolerably: still he sung well, for nature had given him ear, voice, and taste. His etchings were so clever, that as you looked at them you involuntarily regretted he was not a poor man; for poverty would have made him great: but he had at-

tempted all styles, and, consequently, had obtained eminence in none. Perhaps he was more gifted as a poet than as either painter or musician, for imagination and perception are natural gifts, and all the knowledge chance and circumstance throw in the way, whether granaried in crowded cities, or scattered over lonely country scenes, all come as unsought grist to the poet's mill:—the process may be similar for forming the poet and the painter, but with the former it is more involuntary.

But all these gifts, each of which, exclusively cultivated, would have constituted that restless, disappointed, sensitive, inscrutable, and yet sublime being, called "a genius," when combined made of Osmond Delamere a creature never burthensome to himself, therefore, never so to others—a companion for young female hearts, dangerous in the extreme: for though the times of romantic adventure and wild peril are past,—though there are no dragons, and, alas! no errant knights to rescue, nor false ones

to carry off the fair-vet has this quiet comestic age dangers of its own-hearts may be stormed instead of castles, and hearts can be. alas! surrendered, too!—If beauty cannot be led away captive, her peace of mind can be exthralled for ave! and more dangerous than the older knights with lance and spear is he whose weapons are the bright unerring weapons of the mind. Not he who lays all waste around him, but he who makes all seem a waste where he is not. Such there are; and Osmani. Delamere was one! The pleasant exc.: ement in which his varied talents, his humour, his fas intions, kept the women whom he distinguished. made all seem " weary, flat, stale, unprefitable? without him. Respectable, elizible, and really very tolerable admirers, became, in companson with him, insufferable bores; and as, of all he charmed, Captain Delamere could only many one, he was, in the strongest sense of the word "a detrimental."

# CHAPTER IX.

When Jessica awoke on the morning after the play, the first thing that occurred to her mind was Delamere's detected laugh (as she fancied) at her tears! Unpleasant reminiscences are as ready at the riveil of the triflers with their happiness, and squanderers of their peace, as duns are at the levee of the spendthrifts of their fortunes. Jessica knew it made her miserable to think of it, yet she lay two hours awake thinking of nothing else. She might have continued for some time longer this adroit system of self-torture, which too many, alas!

possess, making memory a rack, and fancy an executioner, had not Flounce come in.

"Please Miss, my Mistress 'opes, Miss, you're ready to make the breakfast, Miss. She has a hintolerable 'ead-ache, Miss, and nothing, Miss, is of any heffecaciousness but a cup of strong tea, Miss. What a delightful beverage is tea, Miss! So hexcessive beneficial to the nerves, Miss."

"What shall I do, Flounce? I am not drest; stay and help me a little; Lady Vernon will be so impatient."

"Oh! you'll soon be attired, Miss; I'm quite one who take time by the fire-lock, Miss."

"Stop, give me that little morning cap, Flounce."

"Oh! pray Miss, don't disfigure your 'ead with such a hold-fashioned hobsolete thing, Miss! Why, the 'air, which ought to be the leading feature in the 'ead, is completely 'id, Miss."

"Never mind that, Flounce, I can dress before any one calls." "I don't know that, Miss. Captain Delamere 'ave already sent a beautiful boukky of 'ot-'ouse flowers, as it's my lady's birth-day, Miss, and Mr. Burridge, Miss, 'ave done such a very houtray, hout of the way thing, Miss."

"What, Flounce?" asked Jessy, despondingly, fearing to hear he was coming to breakfast.

"Why, Miss, it's a sort of thing, Miss—one of them things, Miss, which is almost unmentionables, Miss," said Flounce, putting up her smart apron as if to hide her blushes.

"What can you mean, Flounce? pray, speak

"Well, Miss, if you command it; but I'm sure you'll say, Miss, such things, Miss, is quite unmentionables, Miss."

"Well!"

"Why, then, Miss, it's a flannel-petticoat, Miss," said Flounce, with heroic effort.

"A flannel petticoat, Flounce?"

"Yes, Miss! Mr. Burridge: he is so hob-

solete, Miss, and so houtray; he actual sent a note to my mistress. Miss, to beg she'd lend him, Miss, a hold flannel-petticoat to put round is 'ead, Miss; and mistress behaved more condescending than I should have done, and 'ave lent 'im one. Miss! It seems, Miss, he fancy new flannel does 'is 'ead no good, Miss, but I think that's a 'oax to cover his avaricity; and really, Miss, he quite puts one to the blush; and that great country lout, his page, Miss, with the himperence of a man, though he ha'nt nothing but a boy, Miss, knew as well, Miss, what it was as could possible be. I think, Miss, Mr. Burridge had consulted 'im, Miss; for when, by my lady's orders, I give it 'im, Miss, pinned up as neat as possible, in several papers, he looked up with his great goggle eyes, Miss, and said 'What is it, Mrs. Flounce?' 'Such things is unmentionables,' said I. mentionables, be they?' said the low wretch, Miss. 'Now, I take, it ta'ant more nor less then a flannel petticoat; and if I'd been

my measter, I'd have sent for a flounce, too! There's imperence, Miss, for a low wretch, not nothing of a man, Miss!"

But Jessica only saw in all this a reason to hope that Burridge's cold would keep him at home all day. "Then Mr. Burridge has a bad cold, I suppose," she said, " and will keep at home to-day?"

"Oh! la, Miss, I should say that's most dubious, Miss; for when I, out of mere peliteness, asked that low Tim, Miss, how his master was, Miss, he said, Miss, 'I hope he'll soon be here to answer for himself; for I'm blowed' (low creature!) 'if, what with his grule, and his flannel, and rubbing him down, and all, I ha'ant as tired as if I'd plowed a field; and nothing to show for it, Mrs. Flounce, for the more I do to him the worserer he looks!'"

Jessica laughed.

"Them low characters do make one laugh, Miss; but what could possess Mr. Burridge, Miss, to go and hire as wally a lout, Miss, as

had never rubbed down nothing but a donkey. and so imperent, Miss, that he says there ha'ant much difference, only the donkey did look the better for his trouble and Mr. Borridge don't. I dare say, Miss, miserlyness and avaricity 'ave something to do with it, for he only pays that low Tim five pounds a year and his old clothes; but Tim's already puffed up by other pages he wisits, Miss, and talks grand, and making a despicable attempt at a pun. Miss,—says his master's clothes is too holy for him, and that his wages must be ris; that's his grammar, Miss; and lately, Miss, since Mr. Burridge 'ave been ill, Tim, low wretch! have had nothing, he says, but grule and harrow-root and broth; and he says, if it last, he'll give warning, for he's quite a good wally now. Such conceit, Miss! I told him, Miss, he was only a fit wally for an ass. 'Then,' said he. 'I'm fit wally for half Lunnon!' Low-lived creature! Here, Miss, here's the keys. Please. Miss, ring when you want me."

### CHAPTER X.

WHEN Jessica entered the library on the ground floor, in which it was the custom of the family to breakfast, it was a great relief to her to find it vacant.

The long conference she had held with her own tormenting fancies had wearied and irritated her, and either Lady Vernon's cold illhumours, or Aurelia's triumphant reminiscences of the previous evening, would have been very trying to her excited feelings. But chance is often kind in sparing us our minor trials, just when we feel they would be most intolera-

ble, and Jessy's heart grew lighter at the prospect of this short respite. "I will conquer this weakness," she said, as she marked how her hand trembled in pouring out the tea. "I myself invoke the fiends that torment me! What have I to do with memory or anticipation? I, to whom the past is all pair-the future all fear! Henceforth I shun all reverie as a luxurious poison: I will try to meet contentedly all present trials;-memory and hope are not for such as me!" And even as she spoke one of the minor rays of the beguiler's star flashed through her mind. She looked out upon the conservatory which opened into the room, and as she marked how hopelessly bad the weather seemed to be, and heard the incessant torrents fall on the glazed roof, and beat against its sides, she said to herself:-"Oh, joy! There can be no Mr. Burridge :> day! It would never occur to him to incur the expense of a cab for a morning visit, and the spirit of Macintosh himself could scarcely venture abroad to-day. Then, too, he has a cold, and that makes security doubly sure! And Captain Delamere——Ah! but I have forsworn all reveries, and the thought of him induces them."

Lucy came in. "Dear Jessy, I am so glad you are down, for now we shall enjoy breakfasting tête-à-tête! Mamma has a head-ache, and Aurelia a swelled face. It is her own fault, for she was so enchanted with the staring and whispering of the people, at that cold, perishing entrance last night, that no advice of mine could prevail upon her to put on her hood. It seems Delamere is to call early to read a poem he is going to publish, and to have the benefit of her taste and criticism. Poor Aurelia! and poor poet! However, I suppose, admiring ejaculations, wreathed smiles, and judicious glances, would do: but how are these to be effected with a swelled face?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Can nothing be done to relieve her?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Oh, she is in no pain now; and she has

tried everything that ever was heard of; the result is this swelling, and a fit of dreadful ill-temper; for Delamere is going to Brighton for a week to that little Lord Mandeville, who is very ill; and this morning's poetising, after last night's triumph, was expected to bring things to a satisfactory issue."

- " Poor Aurelia !"
- "Yes; I pitied her, too, till I saw the mood she was in, now declaring it was nothing, and she would get up and dress,—now that she was disfigured beyond all recognition,—now ordering that Delamere should not be admitted at all—then, that he should wait till she came down—next abusing poor Susan, who has been up with her half the night—then, having the glass brought to her for the fiftieth time, and crying, not with pain, but with ill-temper. I told her that I thought her very silly, both for the imprudence which had occasioned all this, and the fuss she made about it. That if Delamere cared at all for her his love would survive a

week's absence, and that, perhaps, he would value her the more, when he did see her, for this slight delay. She was very angry, and begged me to go to order 'not at home' to be said to Captain Delamere; or, if he was told she was indisposed, not to let it be said for worlds that she had a swelled face;—a cold, or a bad headache, would be excuse enough. She then ordered more fomentations, and I know not what besides."

- " And do you think she will get up?"
- "Oh! no. You have no idea how it has disfigured her: but with your perfect beauties, a trifle disturbs the nice regularity of the features. I have ordered that Captain Delamere should be admitted—he would be disappointed else, as he is coming to read his own poetry, one of the few real joys left to poor humanity, and you and I will listen. I feel a great interest in all he writes, and our criticisms (and we will not spare him) will be worth all Aurelia's admiring upcastings and downcastings of the

eyes, her Ohs! and Ahs! her blushes and her smiles.—Don't look so reprovingly, Jessy; I went into her with a world of affectionate anxiety, and her ill-temper has quite disgusted me. Besides, when I said I was sure you would come and sit with her, she replied, 'I shall not see her if she comes: I want neither you nor her to come triumphing here; you are both glad enough, I know, that I should be disfigured; but it won't be for long, as mamma says.'"

"Ah! Lady Vernon has put all those ideas into her head."

"Yes: she has been to see her, and seems to think we are to blame for this contretemps; however, I shall not go near either of them. We will have Captain Delamere and his poem in here; they have ordered that no one should go near them, as they wish to sleep, and I think no one will wish to infringe the order. Then the weather, glorious weather! Jessy; it is scarcely possible Mr. Burridge

ould come—no! with his cold and his horror coach-hire, I should say, quite impossible; we shall have a delightful morning, in spite winter and wet weather."

## CHAPTER XI.

AFTER all, there is no company more pleasing, more cheering, and bewitching, to people of all ages and classes, than that of two amiable, sensible, and sprightly girls. Shelley was aware of this when he peopled the fairy home of his fancy with two sweet sisters. In the presence of two such beings conversation never lags, the cheerfulness of the one fosters that of the other, the kindness of the one sanctions that of the other; except to people desperately in love, such companionship has all the charm of a tête-à-tête with none of its restraint; and

never were two girls better suited to each other, and to society, than Lucy Vernon and Jessica Thornton.

As soon as the breakfast things were removed they hastened to give to the library that nameless charm woman only can bestow. Then blazed the noble English fire (dear, never forgotten friend! receive an exile's passing tribute, an exile shivering by a pile of smoking wood,-and that among snowy hills,-that draws forth tears of anguish!) Then did they wheel round the most easy of the easy chairs, and gather sweet bouquets from the conservatory. and let down the muslin curtains to exclude the dismal prospect of incessant rain, yet leaving the glass doors open to admit " sweet messages from the orange and the violet;" and then did they place on the table books of real poetry, and some choice knick-knacks, and then -they looked in the glass, and thought about their own toilet.

" Jessy," said Lucy, "let me lend you a lace

Pelerine, and put on your light-blue cashmere."

Jessy was nothing loath: so she followed Lucy up stairs, where the latter plaited her beautiful hair, and dressed her most tastefully.

"I never saw you look so pretty," she said, kindly kissing her.

And it was true: this pale-blue cashmere had been presented to Aurelia, but, as the quantity was short, and the colour not very becoming, Aurelia, in a fit of generosity, had made it a birth-day present to Jessica. Lady Vernon was vexed when she saw how becoming to her it proved; but she ordered it to be made up as a morning-dress, and hoped that no one, whose opinion was of any value, would ever see Jessica in it.

blue eyes, and showing off her golden hair fairy figure, set off, too, by Lucy's best pelerine and ruffles, was about to make

Captain Delamere forget—but we anticipate. Lady Vernon at that moment was dreaming, it is true; but she dreamt that she saw the coffin of the little Earl of Mandeville, and beheld Aurelia in long crape draperies, with a countess's coronet on her brow, sitting beside it, with Delamere, the new earl!

"Do you know, Jessica," said Lucy, "I almost wish Captain Delamere would take a fancy to you instead of Aurelia."

Jessica started, and blushed deeply, as she said, "Oh! Lucy, why?"

"Why, in the first place, I think him better suited to you; in the next, I think you better suited to him. Then, Aurelia's uncommon beauty is sure, directly she is introduced, to surround her with noble and wealthy admirers; and I think she would like any other equally good match as well as Osmond Delamere, and any richer and nobler a vast deal better: while you, though you are very pretty, are not likely to have so many offers; and, even if you had,

I doubt whether any would have so good a chance of winning your heart, as this odd, fascinating genius.

"Oh! Lucy, he would never think of me." "And why not, pray? Where could he find a mind so kindred to his own? a poet. painter, musician. Why, child, you are his second self—he does not know that yet, but be will find it out. What companion would he find in Aurelia, or any other common-place idol of the drawing-room and the park? She would think his devotion to the arts a slight to her own charms: while you, you would listen with wrapt delight to his poetry—you would think his darkened attelier a sort of Paradise -the turpentine and oil would seem to you sweeter than frankincense and myrrh. You would never weary of accompanying him-of playing his compositions—of singing his songs. You could share his rapture at a glowing sunset, or a silver moon: but what, dearest—have I vexed you? what have I said, Jessy? look up!" and the affectionate girl rushed to her, and forced away the hands with which she now sought to hide her late smiling face, and there it was, pale and covered with tears: "What is it, dearest Jessy?"

"Nothing," said Jessy, making an effort to be calm; "only you have drawn a picture of happiness, and that is trying to the miserable. Would you paint the charms of liberty to the wasted captive?"

"But you are not miserable, dear Jessy?"

"No, no, I am not; it was a hasty, ungrateful word—forgive it; your kind affection, dear Lucy, makes it ingratitude in me to be sad. Yet do not forget that I seem to be the child of a cold and unwilling charity—that I do not even know who I really am."

"Why, papa's niece, dearest."

"Yes, so I am told; but Lady Vernon once threw out a dark hint that made me doubt it."

"Oh! never mind that; mamma, in her anger, stops at nothing." "And so, I fear, she nearly betrayed a secret of disgrace to me."

"Oh, silly fancy! if you are not what they say, I am sure you are something nobler—better!"

"No, Lucy; in romances disguise often conceals grandeur, but in real life it is generally the shelter of disgrace."

"But what disgrace, Jessy?"

"Ah, heaven knows! I dare not even guess. But is it not strange that my father's name is never mentioned—that I never hear one anecdote of him, or of my mother—that I seem so entirely dependant on your father, and so disliked by Lady Vernon?"

"Ah! that is only because you are so pretty and pleasing; and my mother sometimes fears the men may find out that you are in reality a thousand times more lovely than Aurelia. There, be happy again: these are all silly fancies, by which, perhaps, you most undutifully wrong your august progenitors—come, smile!"

tion seems to be a freehold in the v.

—do not paint a future of so much !

"So much happiness! why I on what all the fashionable belles is would consider a succession of bore painting, music, and the husband them his hobbies—the greatest bore that so exquisite a fate? Oh! Jessy

"No, no! do not look so archly no cause; but when you talk of a loved, you make me remember what

"Well, then, I'll prove to you ho ble it is you should be loved."

"Ah! no, a poor dependant, scar rated by any, and certainly disliked by "Hugh Logical To (foolish as I know the bare idea to be) would I say, that with your heart, your noble feelings, and your gifted mind, there is not a man in England who would not be honoured by your hand. And, since in one so habitually calm and cold as myself, you have kindled a feeling so enthusiastic, what may you not do in the sensitive heart of a young and (forgive me) a susceptible genius. Come, I am glad you are all smiles again; for that is Captain Delamere, I cloubt not."

And it was Captain Delamere, and at first he was much disappointed at not seeing the beautiful Aurelia, and seemed inclined to go away, in the sort of half pet all spoiled children, whether of the nursery or the world, get into when they are disappointed in a favourite whim.

Go," said Lucy: "but no one need envy

down, and beginning, as it were involuntarily,

to settle himself by the fire, in a comfortable arm-chair.

"Oh! not the impression you flatter yourself you usually make on the minds of young ladies, but a general impression that all men are selfish, ungrateful, ill-judging, tasteless creatures, and a particular one that you yourself are eminently so."

"What have I done to deserve this?"

"What? Why, Jessy and myself had resolved to run all risks of scowls and scoldings rather than that you should be deprived of the pleasure of reading your poem—here we have arranged everything for your comfort, are prepared, one of us to enact Fadladeen, and the other Lalla Rookh—were congratulating ourselves on the delightful certainty that a cold, and dread of coach-hire, would keep Mr. Burridge away; and, regardless of all this, like a true enfant gâté, as you are, you are ready to beat us, because you are disappointed in some silly whim or other."

"It is no trifling disappointment for a Feramorz to find the true Lalla Rookh absent: however, it is you who are to enact her part; for I have assigned that of Fadladeen to myself."

"She looks very much like Fadladeen, does she not, Captain Delamere? look at her."

Delamere was just looking at her; for he was struck with the lurking jealousy in her speech. What a lovely creature she is! he thought, as her colour deepened beneath his earnest gaze. I never thought her half so pretty! Can she have written that letter? By Heaven, if she has!

His reverie was interrupted by Lucy asking him whether he meant to go or to stay?

- "To stay, if I have your gracious permission."
  - "Well, then, where is the poem?"
  - "I would rather converse."
  - "For shame, false knight!

THE MARRYING MAN. to settle himself by the fire, in a comfortable € I •le

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"Oh! when the Eastern monarch of old times
Offer'd a kingdom for some pleasure new;
If they had made him rhyme, and read his rhymes,
They'd won the prize, and well deserved it too!

There, that is an impromptu of mine; and as in your heart of hearts you own its truth, begin at once, else we revoke our permission! Now, Jessy, forget the friend in the critic."

Delamere began, rather timidly at first: strange that the lion of a fashionable coterie, who never experienced a feeling of diffidence among real authors and genuine blues, should experience it now, in the presence of two unknown maidens, who had never even sent a sonnet to a magazine; but, spite of that, he respected their taste—and where we respect, we grow anxious—and anxiety is the parent of timidity.

The poem was in truth very beautiful: it was an old tale of love and sorrow, but the ideas and images were new. As Delamere warmed with his subject, and with the deep

interest of his auditors, his face, his voice, his manner grew animated, and the whole group would have formed a pretty subject for a picture of the times of the troubadours. At first the girls occasionally interrupted him: Lucy with some arch remark or quibble, introduced to teaze a little; and Jessy, with some deep and sensible criticism, modestly offered, and which never failed to suggest the means of improving what it ventured to blame; and Delamere was amazed at the depth of feeling and of thought these remarks revealed. And then they paused awhile to discuss poets and poetry in general. The wild grandeur and gentle sweetness of Byron, which Jessy compared to a silver fountain, flower-margined, stealing among dark or giant rocks. Campbell, whose one volume seems the very essence of poetry - an essence, praised be Apollo! all undiluted-but with a thousandth part of that essence what reservoirs of rhyme would minor poets have filled !- Campbell, who plays upon the heart as upon a many-stringed lute, waking a thousand echoes, all sweet, though often "sadly sweet." Wordsworth, whom one loves the more the more he dwells with one; and so on, from these older poets to our modern bards.

The author of Ion, so cold, so pure, so passionless, that we feel as if his genius had lent a life to statues, which, though beautiful, are statues still; and Sir Lytton Bulwer, whose plays have compelled a public sated with the drama, to worship her muse again! A rare triumph, that of rekindling those coldest of ashes—the ashes of a palled affection. A rarer triumph still, that of raising a fallen idol, of re-establishing a creed which, as the Bard has said, when it falls, "it falls like Lucifer, never to rise again." Yet this he has done. People who will not read poems—devour his plays, hang over the transparent depths of his philosophy, and feel their souls borne upward

by the buoyant wings of his muse. Long may that heavenly muse thus soar and sing!

And these remarks, which we have endeavoured to condense, were poured by Jessica into the pleased and astonished ear of Captain Delamere, who admired and approved, perhaps because his own opinions exactly coincided with hers. The more she spoke, the more confirmed was the never-failing triumph of mind; but for some time past the girls had been silent. Lucy, listening with earnest attention, and Jessy with changeful cheek and ever-rising tears—the interest of the story (one of wild passion) was deepening-Jessy's hands were clasped — she scarcely breathed — when - a scuffle was heard at the door; it was flung open, and so enveloped in oil-skins, macintoshes, great-coats, and boas, as to be only recognised by the long tip of a purple nose, Burridge, dripping like a shower-bath, and redolent of indian-rubber and London

rain, stalked, hugely increased in circumference, into the middle of the room.

"I tell you," he said to the butler, who had followed from the hall urging the removal of all these wet auxiliaries, "I tell you I want to show them how to do themselves up to go out in all weathers."

"If the wet doesn't hurt me, I think Mr.
Butler, it can't hurt the room! There, Jessy,
what do ye say to me now? You see no
weather can ever keep me at home; so there's

"Cold comfort," murmured Lucy.

some comfort for you on wet days."

Jessy looked dismayed. "Alas!" whispered Delamere, putting up the proofs of his half-finished poem, "you see an instance of a bore who is weather-proof, but there is no weather which is bore-proof."

"Had you not better take off all those wet things?" said Jessy, seeing sundry little pools on the carpet around him. "You will take cold."

"No, Jessy, I shan't, thank you all the same for your care; but under these, I'm as dry as a bone, as you'll see presently. First, look here; then removing an oil-skin cap, he exhibited his head, enveloped in a macintosh hood, which, attached to an immense wrapper of the same material, produced something of the effect of a friar's cowl. When this was removed, his face was found to be enveloped in a piece of old flannel, the origin of which Jessy knew full well. Under the macintosh aforesaid was a huge pea-coat—a pair of mackintosh over-alls protected his legs-he had immense indian-rubber goloshes over thick boots-and a pair of huge fur gloves. When he first appeared at the door, his eyes glaring through his spectacles with triumph at his achievement, Lucy involuntarily exclaimed, "We eclipse the Zoological Society in our spectacled bear."

" How do ye do, Captain Delamere?" said

Burridge. "Ah! you may well look amazed. There now, just to try their strength, I 've walked with these goloshes right through every puddle I came to; and now," he added, kicking them off—

"Now," interrupted Lucy, "they are very ill-fitted for a lady's sitting-room."

"Why, that's true, Lucy: only I was resolved to shew you what can be done, when one has made up one's mind to conquer the weather."

By this time the heat of the room had elicited a most offensive smell of indianrubber.

"Really," said Delamere, "one will be afraid to go near you, Mr. Burridge, lest, with all that indian-rubber, you should rub one out efface one quite!"

"Mr. Burridge," said Lucy, "will yet efface thousands of gay beaux, whom a drop of rain prevents from paying their devoirs to the fair." "Thank you, Lucy," said Burridge, looking proudly at Jessica. "Just let Thompson remove my umbrella, my macintosh, my cap, and my goloshes. I can't well take off my over-alls; but I don't think they look amiss; do you, Captain Delamere?"

"No, on the contrary, I admire them vastly;"
—and Burridge sate down by the fire, which drew out a stronger effluvia from them, till the girls hoped it might drive him away. They soon perceived their mistake; when, having made the library smell like a macintosh depot, he said, smiling complacently, "It's astonishing what a nice refreshing perfume this macintosh has, when it gets warm. Now I like it better than any of your fine scents; it suits me better."

"Oh! yes; I quite agree with you," said Delamere.

"By the by, Delamere, have you been to Macbotcher yet?"

"No; I have mislaid his address. Never

mind; I've given him yours, and told him to call on you. He made these over-alls!!! What do ye say to that?" And Burridge stood up and turned himself round to shew them off. "Now, to tell ye the truth, he made them out of an old macintosh of my own; and I don't think there's another tailor in all London would have done it like this!"

"I'm quite sure Stultz wouldn't."

"Well; now, if you've got an old macintosh, Macbotcher will do the same for you, and charge you only eight shillings, besides giving you back the pieces; but then you must remember he's a Scotchman, and make a bargain with him." At this moment Delamere's carriage was announced. Poor horses standing in the pelting rain! poor coachman, and poor footman! How you ought all to bless Burridge; for, but for him, how much longer might you not have stood there!

"Farewell, sweet friends!" said Delamere, seizing a moment in which Burridge was admiring one of Macbotcher's button-holes, and taking a hand of each, "in about a week I hope to see you again. Thank you for your patience and gentle criticisms. Believe me, this morning will ever be one of 'the green spots in memory's waste.'

"To us it will," said Jessy, earnestly, and then blushed that she had spoken from the impulse of the moment.

"Macbotcher's a prince at a button-hole," growled Burridge.

"Oh!" sighed Lucy, "try—try to lare away with you that spectacled bear. Do, for pity's sake!"

"Mr. Burridge, can I have the pleasure of taking you home? my carriage is at the door."

"Taking me home! what for?" snaried the surprised Burridge.

"I only meant," blandly answered Deiamere, "that I have a seat at your service, and I fancied you might like to escape so wet a walk."

"I'm very glad of the walk; and I do escape the wet, thank goodness, with my macintosh, goloshes, and umbrella. I'm quite independent of carriages, and all such effeminate contrivances. However," he added, after a pause, suddenly appearing to recollect some old day-school rule of good-manners learnt fifty years ago, "thank you all the same; but I shall sit here till my dinner-time, and not a minute beyond it, for I've boiled cod and oyster sauce, and a roast fowl and a batter-pudding; and every one of those things are spoiled if they're over-done. It's astonishing, now, how Macbotcher stitches a button-hole!" and he recommenced his scrutiny.

"Heaven have mercy upon you both," said Delamere, "for there is no aid in man. Indeed, I would not leave you at the mercy of you wild bore, only that I must be off to Brighton to-morrow; and I have a hundred things to do. On my return, I hope to bring my little invalid cousin to see you; I am sure

- "How much he must be in love with Arrelia," whispered Lucy to Jessica.
- "Has not Mr. Burridge some meres want the ——— Review?"
- "Oh! come and help me to coar him into good humour. When Captain Delamere's poem comes out, we will review it,—pressed

alas! have no talent."

"One need not be a geniugenius."

"What are you cavilling about Burridge.

"Cavilling!" said Lucy; "if; we were saying about you——"

"Why, what were ye saying, I

"What would you say if v agreeing how much more sensibl you are in your macintosh and ! Delamere in his effeminate conve

"Why I should say, Lucy, wha said, that you're a girl of great g sense."

"Well, then, now I'm going !

natured, you know; but a little cutting up would do him no harm; your fashionable men are such coxcombs!"

- "There you're quite right, Lucy!"
- "Well, then, if I wrote a critique of this poem, do you think you could get it into the ——Review?"
- "Of course I could, if it's clever and well written."
- "Oh! I will take care of that. You must not see it till it is in print: then, if you are accused of it, you can swear you never even saw a word of it."
- "Capital! Well, mind you cut him up—
  alash away: then coax him with a little ironical praise; then a little pity for so much lost
  time and labour; then at him again. Oh! I
  wish I had a review. I once wrote an article for
  ——————————, only the confounded editor was jealous
  of me, and never put it in. However, as for
  Delamere, it 'll do him a world of good. I like
  him, too, he 's a pleasant fellow! but it 'll do

him a real service to take him down a little. Think of his losing Macbotcher's address, now."

"Well, then, if I get it ready, you will get it in?"

"Yes, that I will, and I'll bring you a large manuscript book of poems which I once wrote myself in my rhyming days-that's something like poetry! An Essay on Truth, in twelve Cantos, heroic measure, and very like Pope! I never could get it published: where there's merit there's so much envy, and with all your publishers there's so much cavalling and dessous de carte. I do believe it would have made the fortune of the dog who refused it! However, I shall leave it to some one some day: it 'll bring its price yet." And thus did Mr. Burridge weary the poor souls till it was time to envelope himself once more in his armour of macintosh, and to shuffle back to his cod and oyster-sauce, his roast fowl and his batter-pudding.

## CHAPTER XII.

It was on the evening of the wet day we have been describing, that a carriage stopped at the door of Miss Elderton's lodging in the New Road, and a lady hurried out of it and hastened up-stairs to the second floor, where the amiable spinsters dwelt.

"Elderton, are you quite alone?" asked the lady, sinking on a sofa, while Elderton rushed forward with well-assumed rapture, and all her wonted volubility. "My darling Mrs. Winter, is it her pretty self? Well, now, how you do remind me of Lady Lovelace, the greatest beauty of her day, you know. Let me see, she was my mother's—no, my father's brother,—no, cousin,—what do I mean? However, when

she'd taken anything into her pretty little head, just like you, you know, no weather stopped her, you know."

"I know nothing at all about it, Elderton: all I want to know is whether you've done as I told you, and sent them all out?"

"What! all the girls?—To be sure I have! When did she ever know her own Elderton disobey her: they're all gone to a Methodist meeting, you know; anything to keep them quiet and get them out of the way, you know."

Mrs. Winter rose and opened the bed-room door. The bed-room was vacant. "You know, Elderton," she said, "I never believe any thing but my own eyes!"

"Well, I'm sure, you can never believe any thing half so bright and so clear."

"Don't flatter, Elder, I'm not in the humour: have you bought all the things, and will they fit?"

"Oh! that I'm sure they will; for the last week, you know, I've done nothing else, you know: the girls, who can't make out where I go, or what I do. incinere theme is some asver in the case, and wow there T increes it mat."

"Stapid things they it better not attenues it, Ederton."

Lalay herein mentions from I never mention of such a thing: But mily such it is then were how, she has such which spirits, and Law men. Dell immediately mark her in and such waste over Pris does, must be imput, you some: Lamp heavy, they I never mean of mending will say secret if nime."

"As I said before they a water not Entertor.

Where we the things, how one you are."

Long links in the pretty little impatient dear. Directly site says the work set w. Elderton runs like a large lightning. . The to her own Pris. There have and Alia Elderton betraging in a summers set it main many laborations at man course garren which his represently missers. There, was who has Principle Elderton mind have tone at the principle Elderton mind have tone at the principle.

- "Are you sure they 'll fit me?"
- "Fit like a glove! let's try them."
- "You are a good, clever old thing, Elderton; what did they cost?"
- "Here, my little Adonis! here's the little bill—I've made it all out for her."
- "Don't tease me with bills, Elder, you know I can't bear them: what's the total, you old noodle?"
- "La! now, how you do make me laugh, just like my uncle, Judge Elderton, always joking and calling every one 'old,' you know: in his fun he called me old Pris when I was a babe in arms."
  - "Well, I dare say you looked old, even then."
- "Oh! you pretty funny dear! you are so like ----"
- "Tais-toi, vieille bête! and tell me what the things cost, and help me on with them."
- "Won't she cast her pretty bright eye over the bill?" and Miss Elderton held out the bill in which she had only over charged fifty per cent. upon each article.

- "Tell me the amount at once, Elderton, and pray do as you're bid!"
- "Well, then, altogether, the things came to thirty pounds."
  - " And I gave you fifty?"
- "Yes;" and Miss Elderton put her hand in her pocket.
- "Don't fumble there I dare say there's nothing in it! the twenty pounds are for your trouble."

"Oh! the nicey, pretty, kindy, deary!" said Miss Elderton, dancing about the room to shew her gratitude and her joy, "I wouldn't take it from her, you know, only I have had a world of trouble and expense in coach-hire and shoeleather; and, as my great uncle, General Elderton, used to say, you know,—he that had that love of a place, Elderton Hall, that 's now pulled down,—poor dear! he used to say, the labourer is worthy of his hire, you know!"

But Mrs. Winter was coquettishly adjusting her foraging-cap before a glass, and darkening her eye-brows and her upper lip, and tinting vol. 1.

her cheeks; and this done, she exclaimed, "Pull off my shoes and put on my boots, Elderton! and now don't make one remark, or speak a word, till I'm quite ready: if I let you chatter on, I shall never be dressed."

So Elderton, with nothing but a pantomimic expression of rapture, completed the toilet, and, when it was done, Mrs. Winter threw her arm round Miss Elderton's scraggy neck, and said, "Divine Priscilla, one kiss!"

"La!" said Miss Elderton, affecting a sudden prudery, "you do look such a love of a young exquisite man, I declare I don't like to give you a kiss; I feel quite odd."

"Well, I should think you never had such an offer before, Pris, and never will again."

"No, to be sure; well, give me a kiss: only you are so like a love of a man!"

"No, Pris," said the dandy, eyeing her through his glass,

> ' If you will not when you may, When you will you shall have nay.'

How old do you think I look?"

\*Oh! not more than engineer: and there is no main town to be compared to you. Are you are he will be at home: \*\*

"la! I sent a note this afternoon to say. the writer of that letter would call in the stering, disguised, alone, and traume entirer to his honour and generousty. I begget at sever might be left, directed to Comme. s - Library: and here it m. It merely says he will receive Corinna. and she may sepend entirely upon the monour and senter of her highly-flattered Osmanic Desanters Nov I feel a strange futter: but vot know. Easeton. I do so love him and I camen think or his throwing himself every on man stumm anrelia. So when I go it I shall have off an cap and here wie, and my own rong name and will fall around me, and tell my story in me. There, I must practise I a little. vil that do ? "

"Oh! divinely. I was you were gone I declare I'm getting outse it note with you

so desperately in love with Bab, veigled away by Miss Cheshire. Alderman Cheshire: let me see was Lord Mayor after—no, he was derman Price, his cousin, was: weigled him away by making of Bab too clever, a genius, and a lithat, you know!"

Miss Elderton was allowed to heeded, while Mrs. Winter put touches to herself, and then she "By Jove! Elderton, that's hal and I must be there at nine: send How my heart beats!—I shall com so have tea ready, and mind you a declare I feel fluttered—but he method—don't nearly in the method.

- "Oh! he must guess it, I should think. Is that the coach?"
- "Yes, my handsome young beau! here, I'll come down with you. La! I hope no one will see a young man slipping out of our rooms—it might get abroad."
- "Depend upon it, Elderton, no one would believe it; but if it were believed, it would do you a world of good, for it might put it into the head of some old fellow or other to make up to one of you."
- "Oh you funny, beautiful fellow! Mind you tell poor Elderton all about it. A thousand Cupids attend you, you Adonis you!"
  - "Hold your tongue, you old flatterer."
- "Is she safe off?" exclaimed Miss Bab Elderton, opening a closet just as Pris returned to the room, and hot, squeezed, and tumbled, out came the three girls, who had been shut up all the time amidst brooms, coals, and dusters, both because they were very curious and because they had no other place to retreat to.

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enit Bet.

" Delamere 'I soura her, and so too," said Deliy.

- " Ok : I hope he will," exclaime
- "Let us drink to her downfall in tankard of Dublin stout," said Lav rather a red face and a bottle nose.

"Well, take the money you wassid old Elderton, throwing herself a with all the airs of the purse-proud pendent, "and get every thing rehalf dead. Bring my slippers; I've good day's work. If you are tired, I be? Why I felt inclined to heat

when she returns I must have tea ready, and not must all get back into your closet. Do let take care of the money; I'm sure it's hard most to get. Oh! is that the porter, Bab? Do give me a glass, I'm quite exhausted."

Those who are affectionately interested in the Miss Eldertons will be glad to hear that each had made a supper worthy of a carter, and was safely ensconced in the closet again before Mrs. Winter's return.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Captain Delamere was pacing impatiently up and down a room at the back of his house, which he had fitted up as a study, and where he generally sat when alone, or with some favoured friend. It was spacious and elegant; and, besides its beauty, had a look of comfort seldom found in costly apartments. No footstep could be heard on the thick carpet of velvet pile, and, as "the noblest study of mankind is man," so was this grand subject of contemplation multiplied in several large and flattering pier-glasses. Every kind of reading-chair abounded. Alas! those reading-chairs! they make not reading men. A

large and graceful lamp threw its soft light over every part of the room, and fell judiciously on some exquisite paintings and choice marble Two sides of the apartment were fitted up with very handsome books, which conveying as the light shone on their rilt bindings) the idea of inexhaustible stores of amusement for the mind, added not a little to the feeling of bodily comfort. The walks were hung with becoming crimson draperies—there were several stands of rare exotics, and some bouquets of hot-house flowers on the table: a group of Delamere's musical instruments were huddled together in a corner; and a giganta sleek black-and-white cat lay on the rug before the blazing fire, purring aloud.

Delamere looked at his watch, compared if with the pendule, gathered a flower, heaped coals on the fire, opened a book, flung it down, and then, for the twentieth time, took a note from his pocket and read—" I have resolved to brave all; any change must be for the better:

actual despair were preferable to this slow wasting fever of my heart. In disguise, and alone, I shall call on you this evening at nine! I have much to say which I cannot write. Oh! when you left the square to-day, did you not know that eyes full of tears of passionate tenderness watched till even your chariot wheels had disappeared ?- Did you not know that I wished those wheels were passing over the form you heed not !- At nine, then ! alone ! Ah! think not lightly of what seems so light an action; the devotion of my love sanctifies and protects me. In your honour I confide !- judge me not harshly. Direct a line to Corinna, at H--'s Library, Regent-street; but seek not my name: you will know all full soon !"

Having read this note again, and put it up, Delamere once more began to pace the room; the monotonous purring of the cat, and pattering of the rain, seeming to mock his wild impatience.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Yes, yes," he murmured, "it must be Jes-

sica. When I saw her to-day, so blushing, so timid, I fancied it impossible: but this confirms it. She watched me till I left the square. Ah! how wildly she must love, to induce a nature so shrinking as hers to take a step like this! Why even I feel almost awkward in receiving her here!—judge her harshly! dear, lovely, Jessica. It is in her wild devotion, her spotless purity, and sweet ignorance of this world and its wicked ways, that she comes!—trusts in my honour! None ever did that in vain. Not Dian's self could be more sacred from one unhallowed thought! No, Jessica! for purity like thine is every spot a temple."

In the midst of this soliloquy, the noiseless butler approached.

"Sir, there's a person below very anxious to see you; he won't take any denial; and says, he's sure you would not miss seeing him on any account."

"What sort of person, and what's his

"By Jove! the very person I ex with an oath, which the idea of kept waiting below must excu hastened the movements of the Wilson.

The door of the study was ge and as gently closed; while more g Wilson apply his ear to the key-ho

Delamere came forward, the light a short figure in an oil-skin cap plaid cloak.

"What do you want with me? mere, astonished, as he gazed on a grey eyes, high cheek bones, and —"that can never be a woman!"

"Why, just to tak your measure

"What do you

make you a pair of gude overalls out of an auld macintosh."

"And whythe devil didn't you send up your name and your business?"

"The deil's just nothing to do with it ava. I didn't send up my name, becase I ken the ways of the warld—every mon for himsel. I ween your gentlemon, as he calls himsel, looks on your auld clarths as his ain, and if I'd tauld him my name and my business the deil a bit would I have been let up to tak your measure; I'd have had to go back agen for my pains."

Delamere burst into a fit of laughter; and Macbotcher took out a strip of greasy parchment and began to measure him.

"And can I have a sight of the auld macintosh, if you plase?"

"No, no; that's all a mistake—I have no such thing; you must find the stuff yourself; but we must make a bargain. Now, Macbotcher, be reasonable!"

Macbotcher's eyes twinkled. "Reasonable

I'll be, sure enoo: but dinna forget there's Mrs. Macbotcher, and all the wee Macbotchers: I've mony mous to feed."

"Well, you can't feed them all out of the profits of my overalls."

"I feed them all with the wark of my ain twa hands; and bonny bairns they are, and muckle gratefu' am I to God for the strength and the wull to wark."

As Macbotcher spoke there was something in his red eyes, and the sentiment he expressed, which made the idle élégant feel an involuntary respect for the old botching Scotch tailor.

He took out a five pound note, and said, "There, Macbotcher, give that among your bairns as a Christmas-box for me."

"I'll e'en tak care of the siller for them mysel till they're auld enoo to need it. What do the bairns want noo, by their ain braw fire-side, with the brose and the bannocks, and the haggis, on the Laird's day, and their ain mither to see they dinna eat too much of the gude cratur comforts." "Well, but now, Macbotcher, what will you charge for the overalls?"

"Three guineas; or, I might tak punds."
A loud knock was heard.

"Tak guineas, and tack pounds on to them, only take yourself off directly," said Delamere, hurying him away.

"Aweel, aweel, a mon must have time to tak himsel off: gude night, I wush you weel, and thank ye kindly."

"A young gentleman waits below, sir; he says, sir, he's here by appointment, and he wo'n't give his name."

"Show him up. What, is it a boy, Wilson?"

"Why sir, he's small enough to be a boy, but his face does n't look very young, some-how,"

"Show him up this instant, fool! Why Hebe herself has not a more youthful face than Jessica; but Wilson, I suppose, sees no youth except in plump cherry-cheeks. How strange she should come dressed as a boy!"

On the stairs the new comer encountered Macbotcher: his accustomed eye immediately detected that the figure before him was neither man nor boy. "Aweel! aweel!" he said to ◀ himself, taking a long pinch of snuff as he gazed: "It's nothat easy to deceive Macbotcher with a' your struts and strides—but a still tongue makes a wise head, and yon Southron loon of a gontlemon's gontlemon is as blind as a fiddler, and sees naething of the lassie in the blink of yer bonny black ee. Aweel! aweel! I hope ve're gist nae honest mon's bairn. Ah! ah! my braw young captain. A mon's a mon for a' that;' but a lassie who once gaes wrang gaes wrang a' thegither. Oh Lunnun toun! ye're nae gude for the lassies: so I'll een gae hame to my Effie and Girzie. for though Effie's a wee squint in her een, and Girzie's nae straight in the bock, and baith hae the braw red hair, that's nae so weel respected in Lunnun toun; yet, puir things, I doubt nae there'll be chiels enoo spreading

their sources for them in this sinfu' toun. Ah! Macbotcher, ye 've jist made a gude bargain, my man: three guineas for the overalls, and out o' that ye'll clear jist twa pund ten; and five pund for the bairns, thot maks eight pund three bawbies. A gude day's wark, and the captain none the waur of it, I trow—better to help an honest mon wi' a gude wife and mony bairns, than thraw awa' the gude siller on trumpery queans, that a'n't ashamed to wear a mon's—aweel, aweel!"

## CHAPTER XIV.

THERE is no woman whose nature is so scorched by the sun of fashion, or so hardened by the petrifying waters of the fountain of self-ishness, that all traces of her bashful nature are completely, and under all circumstances, effaced.

The bold, the worldly, the sensual Mrs. Winter felt this, as Wilson gently closed the door behind her, and she found herself alone in the presence of Captain Delamere. Her first impulse was to bring her face into her hands, and thus, seeing before him only a slight form wrapped in a dark and ample cloak, Delamere rose, with an expression and

feeling of vivid interest. The next movement of Mrs. Winter was not so natural, and, consequently, not so graceful. She was herself again: she stepped forward, took off her foraging cap, with its light curls, unclasped her cloak, which dropped on the ground, and stood in her close-fitting male attire, her black hair falling on her shoulders.

"Good heavens! Mrs. Winter," said Delamere, and he retreated a few steps.

Mrs. Winter crossed her hands upon her bosom, and cast down her eyes, with an expression which the attire she had chosen, and the place where she stood, rendered almost ridiculous. At length, perceiving that Delamere, annoyed, disappointed, and, perhaps, disgusted, made no advance, she slowly raised her eyes, and said, "Am I then unexpected—and unwelcome?"

"Madam!" said Delamere, "this honour was certainly quite unlooked for; and, flattered as I feel, I own I am not prepared for it."

"Honour! flattered! not prepared! Osmond

Delamere! icicles falling on a red-hot furnace are fit emblems of the effect of words like these, upon a heart like mine. Whom then did you expect? Who but Eveleen Winter loves you well enough to dare so much?—Ah! it is not that my scruples were weak, but that my passion is strong! Think you it has cost me nothing to conquer woman's native bashfulness, and acquired reserve?—behold this garb."

"I do, madam, and with deep regret," said Osmond, still stationary.

"Regret! say rather contempt: it were nobler to say it than to let me gather it from that curling lip, and cold, cold glance!"

"No, madam, you wrong me; the confidence you have shewn in my honour, and the preference you have condescended to evince for me, deserve my gratitude; a feeling I cannot better display than by entreating you not to prolong an interview, which risks the fair fame of one who holds so enviable a place in the world's opinion."

"And what is the world to me! If you love me not, at least you do not love another-had you loved Aurelia Vernon you would have shunned this meeting altogether. Osmond. look upon me! these poor features! - this form!—the world calls them fair, but they are dear to me only if they can win your love. Our years are not ill-matched—I have past the chilly blight-fraught season of first spring, but who does not prefer the warm dawn of summer:-my fortune, it surpasses yours, I lay it at your feet:-my influence, the influence of family connexion, wealth, and some my wit and beauty,—shall be yours for ever: but, better than this, than these, than all, I love you with a wild and passionate devotion, and a constancy which years of coldness have never sufficed to chill. Osmond Delamere, reject me now!"

"Madam!" said Delamere, somewhat affected by the earnestness of her concluding words, "talk not of rejection! It is a cruel word to use to one who, if he cannot love, ad-

boy, it will not be taught!"

"Farewell, sir!" said the lady, placing her cap and adjusting "Blazon not this adventure to th lieve that, in the galling mortific result, my rash step is amply puni

"Mrs. Winter," said Delamere, tending his hand, "let us part frie not so wrong my honour and my l

Mrs. Winter had approached these words she turned round, rush back, so suddenly that her cap, whe cident or design, again fell off dropped on her knees.

"Hear me!" she said, clasping hand in both of hers, "I am a protenderness and devotion and intimacy will do:
promise to come to me,—promise to shun all
others if you cannot give me love! At least,
do not deny me hope."

"I cannot—I must not—deceive you, madam! Yet believe that the pain I feel equals that which I inflict: my heart is a true prophet where its own affections are concerned. It were unmanly to beguile you with the promise of a love which it is, perhaps, too unworthy to feel! I am deeply grieved, but I owe it to you to be sincere!"

"Then hear me," said Mrs. Winter, slowly rising, lividly pale, even through her rouge, tears of deadly passion filling her eyes, and her hands clenching of themselves, "Hear me!" and she laughed a short demon laugh, "my love has brought me to your feet; my revenge shall crush you yet! Proud, insolent, that you are, the hand you have spurned shall work your ruin. I know not yet the means; but by the curses which, like wild dogs, are gnawing

at my heart, from this hour, cold, insulting man, thou shalt date thy downfal! Follow me not! parade not this thy triumph to thy base menials.—less base, though, than thyself! I am not crushed! Know you the anchor, the iron anchor, of the injured—to which Hope's silver banble is as a broken reed—Revenge! When Earth's vilest portion is yours, noble, generous-feeling Captain Delamere! then will I seek you, and whisper to you that watchword which will be ever on my lips—Revenge!"

So saying, she calmly replaced her cap, folded her cloak around her, and, pale and trembling with passion, returned to the hackney-coach which awaited her at the door.

"Hell has no fury like a woman scorned," murmured Delamere to himself as she left the room. "Fool that I was to suspect a modest, delicate girl, like Jessica, of so bold and unfeminine a step!—That woman's curses still seem to haunt me.—Sweet Jessica, how could I so wrong you!"

## THE MARRYING MAN.

How different the same action appears, seen through the medium of two different feelings! In Jessica it would have been heroic, impassioned, confiding!—in Mrs. Winter it was indelicate, unfeminine, inexcusable!

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VOL. 1.

## CHAPTER XV.

There's nae luck aboot the house,
There's nae luck at a',
There little pleasure in the house,
When our gude mon's awa!

BURNS.

BEAUTIFUL burthen of the wife's glad song,—thy homely sweetness steals from her true heart to her smiling lip! The whole household, catching the inspiration thence, gaily repeats the strain; the good man returns, and the festival of the affections begins! Sweet motto how much does thy purifying influence rais the humblest home above the proudest palar if there the heart disowns thee! What is i welcome of officious menials, or of noble gue if there is no real rapture in the wife's embino imitative delight in the children's !

Alas! alas! how often do we vainly seek the heart's true welcome, not only in the palace but the cottage; and even through homes of all intermediate gradations, how often is it wanting! How often does the husband's return bring gloom instead of sunshine; how often does his footstep seem to the wife, not only to have "no music in 't," but to be heavy with coming dissension, discontent, and gloom:—and why is this? The secret lies in a few words the want of confidence, of boundless, entire, noble confidence. In many homes the husband is harsh, and the wife is full of fear! Sometimes, and that not seldom, the case is reversed, and the result is then even more fatal to domestic peace, and more disgusting to behold! But in the former, and the most frequent, after the husband has ceased to be the lover, he degenerates too often into a harsh, sarcastic, fault-finding tyrant; as he reproves indiscriminately, and without any expression of kind regret, he wakes no generous wish to meet a

taste which generally seems based on opposition; but in woman's nature there is a natural shrinking from perpetual disapprobation, and what through love she would have conquered, through fear she conceals! But concealment, especially in domestic intercourse, is seldom effectual; first, then, comes fear, progenitor of a thousand mean deceits, paltry evasions, and cowardly prevarications; then follows detection, increased harshness, increased distrust, and increased cunning. Beware, ye husbands! and beware, ye wives! let truth and forbearance be your watchwords: be not extreme, ve not all-faultless lords, to mark and censure what is done amiss; nor you, ye wives, so tremblingly conceal from man those errors you cannot hide from God. Be ashamed of falsehood, for that is base in all; try not to be found wanting in affectionate foresight and sweet solicitude for him who chose you from the world to be a help, meet for him; but own no puerile fear of a creature who should only reprove in humility and love, remembering that he is to the full as weak, as erring, and as sinful as yourselves!

Sir William Vernon was the sort of husband we have hinted at-tyrannical, fault-finding, and sarcastic; and Lady Vernon was what such a man's wife would naturally be (unless nature had made her unusually noble and sincere)—a cowardly, prevaricating, cunning woman. She never defied, but she constantly deceived him. His approach spread a gloom through his home. Looks of dismay announced his arrival, and a letter from him was opened with an effort: "Mind you say nothing about it before Sir William." " I shall not own it to Sir William." "Beware what you say before Sir William." These were words ever on Lady Vernon's lips; facts were denied, letters concealed, totals of bills altered—everything falsified; and they might as well have remained as they were, for such as they were made to appear they called forth nothing but sarcasm and reproach.

Lady Vernon came down to breakfast in one of her worst humours the day after Delamere's visit: she had heard from Flounce that he had been received by Lucy and Jessica, and she was prepared to attack the latter with unwonted bitterness, when the sight of a letter on the table diverted her attention. She recognised her husband's hand.

"Your father is coming home to-day," she said to Lucy, in a voice that announced an unexpected calamity; "therefore, as Aurelia cannot leave her room, I shall not consent to your dining with Jessica at the Ogletons—I do not choose to receive your father alone. He writes in a particularly bad humour, and I am not going to bear it all, I assure you."

"Well, Jessica can go."

"No, Jessica cannot go; I must get Jessica to explain how it was that the carriage got bruised the other night; I am sure it was no

fault of mine, as I beg you will say, Jessica. As your uncle is so fond of you, I think you might take the blame on yourself. How I am ever to tell him about the large mirror, I do not know: I think I shall say, I have had it removed to be cleaned, and get another somehow. So mind you don't let anything out about it. You needn't say Captain Delamere has been here so often; perhaps he might find fault; particularly as he has not proposed. Tell him Burridge has been here every day. and that we went to the play to please him. And then, dear Jessy, I shall be obliged to get you to ask him for fifty pounds for me, for I really cannot put Marabout off any longershe's grown quite insolent, and I am so nervous about money-matters."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Will papa stay long in town?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;I hope—I mean, I fear he will hardly be able to stay long. Don't let him see your new dresses. He grumbled sadly about the last you had; and don't wear your new bonnet, Lucy. If

your own."

"Not unless he asks, which likely."

"Be very careful, both of you say. I am going to look all over a see that there are no stupid bills impertinent letters about—they on Oh, dont say we've heard from least, not that he asked for money Oh, la! how ill I feel! I'm sadly ou What a wretched day it is."

And that was a wife on the me husband's return!

"Well, if ever I have a husb Lucy, "which seems improbable of I've neither beauty nor wealth, let as he will, he shall hear the truth. varience, and sell my soul by inches to the father of lies,—no, not for the dread of the most cutting sarcasms that ever severed hearts, nor the angriest voice that ever stormed at home, yet made sweet music abroad — nor for the surliest gentleman that ever stamped and strutted in my drawing-room, yet ambled gracefully in every other!"

Jessica never felt more forcibly than on this morning, that circumstances (however fraught with discomfort) cannot of themselves constitute sorrow. She had many unpleasant anticipations connected with Sir William's return; and, worse still, she had a most painful task to perform, namely, that of asking a favour—and that favour of Burridge! Yet her heart beat with a sort of wild gaiety—she felt sure that Delamere did not despise her—she almost fancied he liked, admired, appreciated her! She had no definite hope for the future—but all seemed, though indistinct, yet sunny in the distance. His every word, look, tone, recurred

to her mind - his ready and even gr adoption of her suggestions-the parting sure of her hand-his allusion to her r blance to his little cousin-the child he whose smile would recal hers! He think of her! Oh! could such joy, suc tinction await the poor protégée! Os Delamere would think of her! Nav. thought of her! He had said, the morni had spent with her would be one of "the spots in memory's waste!" He did no another! His heart was not engrossed that thought led her too far, and she ch it. He had left the proofs of his poen her -here was sweet food for fancy: too, she had to review it. She had written a critique,-but what are difficultie woman who loves! She hastened, lader piles of "Blackwood," the "Quarterly " Edinburgh," and the "Westminster," own room, there to take a lesson in revie and she had written a sort of opening ess

egreen heights of Parnassus by a message was below, and no one while but herself. Oh! dusty, beaten track daily life! all flint and thorns, and lowering bloods above, and cutting blasts around! how dious dost thou seem to those, who have just been dreaming by Helicon's pure fount, couched on immortal flowers, and shaded by the laurels of the just!

Poor Jessica! the actual, with all its miserable earthy cares, is before her now. That moming she had received a letter from Marcus. In order that no one else should see it, it was sent her under cover to Flounce. It informed her that he was lying perdu in Paris, hiding away from his creditors there; but that unless, by some means or other, a hundred pounds could be sent him, his next letter would be dated from a French jail. "I have written to you, dear Jessica," he said, "because you have not only a kind heart, but a winning way, and

a pretty face. Lucy, I know, would do all she could, but I doubt her influence. It is of no use to speak to my father; the last sum he sent me he could ill spare, and I lost it at a throw. My mother would only be teased by being applied to; she can do nothing. But if you would ask Burridge, who would do anything to oblige you, (as if for yourself, though, else there is no hope,) I might be able to get safe back .- P.S. I am very ill (but I deserve it all.) and am suffering from actual want." This postscript had escaped poor Jessy, when she first read the letter. "Oh, Heaven!" she murmured, clasping her hands, while tears rose in her eyes, "what are these vain and selfish scruples: be still, proud heart! poor, kind Marcus, who ever befriended me, ill, and in want!" She hastened down stairs, in time to hear the street door violently slammed; Burridge, angry at her delay, was gone. She despatched a footman after him to beg him to return; he sent back word "that his time was

too precious to be wasted in waiting, and he wouldn't come back." I must write to him. thought Jessy, and she hastened to her room. But how to begin! Would it be better to commence about something indifferent, and only ask this strange, tremendous favour at the end. No, that looked like deception, and would perhaps enrage him. Could she begin at once by asking for the loan of a hundred pounds. The loan! She who had not a sou, or a chance of one; she might as well say the gift, at once. How lame and halting seemed her late rapid, glowing- pen. How arid her invention. She had got no farther than "My dear sir," that brilliant opening, after which so many come to a stand still, when she was hastily summoned by Lady Vernon. Sir William was arrived, sooner even than was expected. Oh, ve railroads! how rapidly do ve bear the unwelcome along!

Sir William was in the library with Lady Vernon and Lucy: he looked pale, harassed, and cross; but he received Jessy with unwonted kindness.

"And how is your great admirer, Mr. Burridge, Jessy?" he said, playfully.

"He is pretty well, and has been here every day."

Jessy's heart beat quick: oh! perhaps the "some one" alluded to was her poor self.

"What is become of the mirror?"

"I have had it removed; it required cleaning and gilding," faltered Lady Vernon.

"A very unnecessary expense," snarled Sir William. "Let the carriage be ordered; I must go out." Lady Vernon grew very pale, and cast an imploring look at Jessy.

"We have had a little accident with the

carriage, sir," said the kind-hearted girl; "do not be very angry; it is only a slight bruise, and pray blame no one but me."

"0h, I dare say it's a mere nothing," said Sir William; "when did it happen?"

- "The evening we went to Covent Garden."
- "We went to oblige Burridge," mid Lady Venon.
- "A curious way to oblige a man who hates theatricals," sneered Sir William.
- "Oh! but he is becoming quite a young beau; and, if I mistake not, Jessy's charms have wrought the change." Sir William looked at Jessy with a peculiar smile.
- "Oh, by the by, I hope Captain Delamere has not been encouraged here, unless he has intimated some intention of proposing—he would be an excellent match for Aurelia, and seemed half in love, when I left town: but nothing so much prevents young danglers from coming to the point, and binding themselves in any way, as the having free access to

a woman's society without—pray, how often has he been here?"

"Oh! he has called occasionally—but Aurelia has been confined with a cold,"

"So much the better: Aurelia's beauty may win the eye and dazzle the fancy for awhile; but she has no mental powers to captivate the mind. Now leave me: I wish to speak to Jessica alone on business."

"Shall I order your cab? you said you wished to go out."

"You are in a mighty hurry to get rid of me," snarled the husband; "I think I shall stay at home to-day. I met Burridge in high dudgeon, at not having seen Jessica, I suppose; and I asked him to dine here at six."

"Well, I will go and order some of his favourite dishes," said Lady Vernon, anxious to escape from her husband's chilling, irritating presence.

"I have already ordered the dinner."

Lady Vernon appeared not to hear him. As she passed Jessica, she whispered, "Remember the fifty, my love," and with this disagreeable injunction Jessica was left alone with her uncle.

It is a nervous thing to be left alone with any one who has mysteriously asked for a private interview; the fancy always suggests some communication fraught with annoyance or pain. One need not have lived very long in the world to learn that the cup of joy is only for the occasional banquet, and that our daily draught is of bitter, or at best of brackish waters. How soon is fear rather than hope the heart's prophet; and a few words may make us so irremediably miserable-no wonder -no wonder we tremble at the thought of any communication of unwonted import—no wonder that Jessica grew pale when such a one was to be made to her by him—so stern, so harsh, so forbidding—him whom, if too highminded to fear, yet she could not trust nor love !

<sup>&</sup>quot;Come hither, Jessica," he said in gentlest

tone, "come hither, and give me your hand, my dear girl."

Jessy drew near, and placed her hand in his.

"You are feverish, dear uncle," she said; and as she spoke she looked up into his face, and read there the confirmation of her remark. The tears rose to her eyes. "You are ill; oh! do have some advice."

"It is advice I want, Jessy; but from you, my child."

" From me! what advice can I give?"

"That of a noble, upright, generous heart.
You do not love me, Jessica, do you?"

"Oh! yes, dear uncle." And so great is the influence of apparent confidence and affection in one habitually stern, that Jessy felt she did love him.

"No one else loves me, Jessy; and why should you?"

"I feel I love you now, more than I knew myself that I did; because the kindness of your manner cherishes the feeling: it would be the same with others, sir!" she added, tremblingly.

"No, Jessy: there are soils from which no wanth can draw one flower,—but that matters not now. You would not like me to die, Jessy?"

"Oh! dearest uncle." And Jessica, almost unconsciously to herself, threw her arms round his neck and burst into tears.

"And yet, difficulty, disgrace, and the fever of my mind, are destroying me, my child." And he placed her fingers on a pulse which seemed as if life, like a racer, was galloping, full speed, for the goal of death.

"Oh! but do not sacrifice a life so precious to many, to the most paltry vanities. I have feared, sir—though, as your poor protégée I have never presumed to express those fears—that all was not well; that this expensive establishment would bring you into difficulties: forgive me. You asked my advice—give it up—be firm. Go abroad to some healthful cli-

"No, no; it is too late. W by-word, a laughing-stock! myself to a life of perpetual i while my name is dishonoured Jessy, death were better far."

"Is there no step you can to you can pursue?"

"Yes, one," and his face brighave your assistance."

are entitled. What can I do?"
"Much! all! You have i

" Mine! oh, to mine you are

Burridge, bear as he is, and he with M—, and that is all I w ship is vacant. If I had that, cornetcy, we might yet hold up the proudest. Appelie

marking the deep and sudden blush that suffised Jessica's face and neck, "which I think extremely probable. I have no right to ask this sacrifice of your feelings; I know what it must be to a sensitive girl to ask a favour of such magnitude; I have not even won, by cultivating your affection, a right to your assistance; I have been outwardly a cold selfish man, but I have always loved you, and now I trust you."

What can I do?—tell me—explain to me. What is this miserable pride, this weak shrinking, when the happiness of so many is at stake—what is it but selfishness and ingratitude!"

Heave no claim on your gratitude.—Oh!

Heavens!" and he pressed his hand on his side,

"what warning pangs are those!"—He seemed
likely to faint; Jessy flung herself on her knees
before him.

Uncle, beloved uncle! I will do all—I will implore Mr. Burridge—I will kneel to him,

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supplicate, entreat him-only struggle with these feelings."

"Oh! Jessy, is the remnant of an ill-spent life worth the sacrifice of one feeling of that spotless heart!"

"Only tell me what to ask."

Sir William Vernon unfolded by degrees his plans and wishes; but still he professed to think that he was unworthy of the sacrifice; his agitation made him actually ill. He retired to his room, leaving Jessy bound by reiterated self-prompted promises to do her utmost with Burridge.

When she was alone, she began to ponder on all she had in a manner brought upon herself, but she foresaw that if she dwelt on the horrors of the undertaking, to execute it would be impossible; and, just as she had pressed her hand on her bosom, to keep down, as it were, the terror and shame she felt at the idea of asking, not merely for the ——ship and the cornetcy, but for the "hundred pounds, as if for herself,"

Lady Vernon, with an expression of selfish eageness and pleasure, came in.

"Well, Jessy, have you got me the fifty pounds?"

Jessy looked quite aghast. In her agitating interview with her uncle she had entirely forgotten her aunt's request.

"Come, I am sure you have done it," said Lady Vernon, in a wheedling tone.

"No: in the agitation of a very painful interview, I quite forgot it: but, had I not, I could not have complied with your wish, aunt, for Sir William was too miserable and too ill for any allusion to money-matters."

"Upon my word, Miss Jessica, it's a strange thing, that, in return for all my favours and protection, you could not do me such a trifling favour as that."

"It is no trifle, madam," said Jessica, even her gentle spirit chafed at last, " to be called upon to ask a considerable sum of one already deeply distressed for money; and, with regard antialit seed it **against** vo<mark>ur</mark> mo area

Jessica sank back in her chi agitated; Lady Vernon was awed, spirited generally are, when they the generous and enduring. She t for the fifty pounds, which she so to obtain, except through Jessica.

"if I spoke sharply; you do not i is to be dunned to death on one sid even to beg on the other for the me every right to claim. When I reflect une I brought your uncle, my heabroken. Why, before I knew him am now so distressed for I have of

houses in Lothbury and Charles-street. He has taken every thing out of my hands, making me sign I know not what. Where is all he got for the timber of my plantation in Berkshire? I have never dared even to allude to it. I often think, if I could but get my fortune back, I should not care what became of him. Let us separate! he has often threatened it. Only let me have my own. I am sure I could be very comfortable."

"Comfortable! what, if my uncle were in want?"

"Why, he keeps me in want, and has done so for years. But, for heaven's sake, never allude to a word I have said."

"I am no tale-bearer."

"No, no, I know you are not, dearest Jessica. You look very faint, here smell to my salts,—try to bear up; do not give way, my dear. If you could but just step to your uncle and ask him for the money, you could lie down afterwards."

have a revolting, a painful duty to day, and I can undertake no oth nature. What my uncle, who I essentially kind to me, implores as I will nerve my heart to do. Whave constantly been persecuting as a right, that I have spirit to have frequently reminded me that less, wretched protégée, how car aid from one so despicable?"

"My dearest Jessy! Marabout
"Marabout, I doubt not, will
for you have frequently obliged he
to you many good customers, and i
better to disappoint her than to
uncle, in his present state of mind
ing, Jessica arose, and quitted the
ing Lady Vernon more kindly disper-

respect for her than she had ever been when the poor girl sacrificed every scruple of her own to comply with some exacting request. But the services rendered to the mean and selfish are always looked upon by them as acknowledgments of inferiority or conciliatory tributes, and they always behave better to those who withhold than to those who grant them.

## CHAPTER XVI.

JESSICA made a becoming toilet, but with a heavy heart. As she braided a few jasmin sprigs in her hair, and arrayed herself in a white dress, in which she looked particularly well, and which Mr. Burridge admired, she felt like a victim decked out for sacrifice; but she knew (as what woman does not) that to be well dressed is to be well armed. Yet she felt degraded in the thought of using for a vile, mundane advantage (thank Heaven not for herself) those charms, given her by Heaven for a far nobler purpose, to win the deathless love of one noble heart;—then came the thought of her uncle's anguish—then again of poor

Marcus's foreign prison, perhaps early death. She dashed away her tears, offered a silent prayer to heaven, and, hearing Burridge's knock at the door, without giving herself time for thought (lest thought should bring indecision), she ran down stairs, and found herself alone in the drawing-room.

With what an awful power a sensitive heart invests any one of whom it is about to ask a favour, on whom it thereby confers the privilege of expressing cold surprise, indignation, humiliating acquiescence, or a still more humiliating refusal. Poor Jessy! how long, and yet how short, seemed the time Burridge spent in divesting himself of his armour of indian-rubber. How one moment she wished the interval shortened, and the next trembled that it must soon be over. She heard a step: where should she be on his entrance—at the window—near the fire—reading—working? Oh! if she could but run to her own room to gain a few minutes' respite, to get Lucy—Lucy's presence would strengthen

her—too late! She was rushing towards the door when Burridge entered it.

He gazed with admiration at her graceful form and heightened colour. And as vanity, like the jewel in the head of the toad, often takes deepest root in the ugliest form, he readily attributed the wild flutter of her manner to affection for himself.

"How do ye do, Jessy? what are you dressed out for?" he said, holding the hand she had extended to him till she had reached the sofa, and then plumping himself down close beside her.

"Dressed out! Mr. Burridge: why, surely, nothing can be simpler than my dress?"

"Nothing can be prettier, Jess. Women wouldn't load themselves with expensive ornaments, and ruinous silks and satins, if they knew how much men prefer a cheap, simple muslin—that's mighty pretty, what did it cost, now?"

"Oh! a few shillings only, and I made it myself."

- "Did ye now, really? And what might one of Marabout's sating cost?"
  - "Fifteen guineas, perhaps."
- "Fifteen guineas! Why, then, a sensible girl, who bought cheap things, and made them berself, might dress for a year, or more, for what one of that extortioner's dresses would cost."
  - "Exactly so!"
- "Would that you've got on now do for a wedding-dress, Jessy?"
- "Yes," answered Jessy, abstractedly, all her thoughts on the favour she had to ask.
- "Then you should take care of it; and not wear it out now. Why have you got it on to-day? who dines here, Jess?"
  - " No one but yourself."
- "And you put it on for me, did you?" and his voice sunk into a tender growl.

Jessy rose, under pretence of ringing for coals, though the fire was most flourishing: but elderly vanity readily attributes every re-

buff to maidenly reserve. Jessy then caught up her knitting, the sharp needles generally acting, unconsciously even to Burridge himself, as defensive weapons.

They were to dine at six: the quarter before six struck. Jessy's heart beat quick; she must come to the point, else how could she meet her uncle's despair?—What would become of Marcus?

- "Do we dine at six?" asked Burridge, looking at his huge silver watch.
  - "Yes," faltered Jessy.
- "I hope we do," said Burridge; for dinner was to him a potent rival with love. "I've had nothing to-day but a suet dumpling, which my landlady sent me for lunch from her own dinner.—Have you any idea what we shall have?"
  - " All your favourite dishes, I believe."
- "What! boiled pork, and peas-pudding, and-"
- "Yes; everything you are known to like!— Mr. Burridge,—sir!" And Jessy's brow, face,

and neck crimsoned, and she trembled so, that Mr. Burridge would have come very near, but for her rapidly-brandished knitting needles, having come in contact with one of which he felt disinclined to repeat the experiment.

"Confound those knitting-needles, Jessy," he said, applying his lips to his hand, "they re very inconvenient things. However, I like to see you industrious, too; and I should think a good deal is saved in the year, if a woman's always at some kind of work."

Jessy either did not or would not hear.

"I have several favours to ask of you," she said, rapidly; "and perhaps I shall not have another opportunity of seeing you alone."

So she likes to see me alone, thought Burridge.

"Well, Jessy, it is strange how little they leave us alone now."

Jessy was too intent on her painful task to heed all this speech implied.

She hurried on without looking up. "You

get a lucrative appointment, and netcy at once, this establishm broken up, and all ruined."

"Ah! so I thought," growle
"Confound Vernon's extravagance
thing of my Lady, with her finery
vels! Here! going on at this r
riages, riding-horses, parties, and
tricked out like duchesses. I alw
how it would be; and you, formin
habits of extravagance very ill su
prospects, I can tell you."

Jessy's spirit rose. "I did not taunts and reproaches, sir," she sa assistance. Will you do what I in that you will be no loser: it is alone, I beg. My poor uncle..."

cousin to-morrow; I'll see what can be done.

Of course, as I'm situated, I can't do less:
but when I think how you all go on, what pride,
and waste, and airs, what dinners, dresses——"

"This is not the time to allude to them," said Jessy, imploringly.

"Why! that's true, Jessica: we shall have time enough for that."

Jessy did not see his drift, or she could not have proceeded.

- "I have something more to ask," she faltered; "something for myself."
- "What is it, Jessy?" said Burridge, his eyes glaring with joy.
- "I am in dreadful want of two hundred pounds!"
- "Two hundred devils!" involuntarily ejaculated Burridge.
- "Nay, more," hurried on poor Jessica, "I cannot tell you for what I want it, or when I can repay it. I can only say, it will be the object of my life to do so."

"Two hundred pounds!" again ejaculated Burridge, half stupified, "two hundred pounds! Why, I would rather ask for all the appointments and cornetcies on the list. Two hundred pounds! What on earth can you, a poor charity child, as one may say, clothed, fed, reared by others, what can you want with two hundred pounds? It's awful!"

"Say no more, sir," said Jessy, wounded pride and excited feeling getting the better of her prudence, "I would rather beg through the streets for it than ask it again of you. You may well marvel what I can want with such a sum; but marvel more what terrible inducement could bring me as a suppliant to one so bitter and heartless. Forget that I have asked you this, sir; or, if you cannot forget it, remember, that when one for whom you have professed so much friendship, told you, with trembling misery, of her need, you taunted her with her utter desolation. And, now, allow me to pass you," she added, as Burridge eagerly tried to detain her.

"No, no, Jessy. Forgive what I have said, in the surprise of the moment. A crust of selfishness may have hardened around the heart of a bachelor for whom none appeared to care; but a fountain of generous feeling gushes beneath, Jessica. I am no niggard in my soul, Jessy. Here," and he fumbled in his pocket for an old greasy leather case, "here are the savings of the last year, ten times the sum you need, child—there, there is a two hundred pound note; you will be so much the poorer for it one day, that's all—there, take it, Jessy. I doubt not you'll be the means of saving it me yet."

But Jessica, absorbed in the memory of his bitter taunts to herself; heard him not. She was aroused from her tearful reverie by Burridge, who was trying to force the note into her hand. She looked at him; his poor green eyes were dim with tears. "There, take it, Jessy, and forgive me; as I said before, I have no doubt you'll save it me yet!"

Jessy averted her eyes: they fell on a picture of Marcus when a boy—a proud, joyous, loving boy!—and he, who had ever been her kind, her generous friend, her earliest champion, he now pined, perhaps perished, in a foreign jail, and she could save him and would not.

"Take it, Jessica," he said, "and to-morrow I'll do my best with my cousin for the ————ship, and the cornetcy, and, as I said before, I doubt not you'll save it me yet."

"I will save every farthing I can earn: I will toil, but I will repay you yet," said Jessica, still ignorant of his meaning; "if my head can plan, or my hands can execute aught, I will yet repay you." And so saying, the victim of others' extravagance snatched up the note, tore her hand from that of Burridge, left him, and rushed to her room, inclosed it with a few lines to Marcus, bidding him husband well what it had cost her so much to ob-

## THE MARRYING MAN.

tain — despatched it — yet in time for the post — sent Lucy to comfort Sir William with the assurance of Burridge's kindness, and then——her martyr spirit failed her, and she fainted away.

## CHAPTER XVII.

When Lucy returned, she fou covering. She, poor dependent, h trained to make light of all indiherself which could at all inconver so, instead of suffering Lucy to alar she compelled her to close the do cepted a few simple remedies, and self of Lucy's aid to re-adjust her herself to repair to the scene of namely, the presence of Burridg not unburthened her heart to L

nicate its joys; and having now so much good news to tell her cousin (for the result was good, and Lucy, of course, could not feel all poor Jessica's delicate misery in the process), she told her candidly all that had passed. Lucy was wild with joy; she embraced her again and again with grateful rapture. Her father, perhaps, rescued! Marcus certainly saved!-provided for !-- and all this by the heroic resolution and self-sacrifice of that timid, gentle being. "Poor, darling, noble Jessica!" she cried, "well did I say there is not a man on earth who would not be honoured by your love. And it was this bitter struggle, this heroic triumph over your own sweet shrinking nature, which brought you to the state in which I found you? Dear Jessy, the thanks of one so powerless as I am may seem paltry, but the gratitude and love of a heart like mine is not valueless to such a one as yours. God bless you, Jessica!"

When one has made a great sacrifice without one hope or dream of gratitude or return, knowledged and appreciated, and Lucy's enthusiastic thanks restored, in some degree, poor Jessy's sunken spirits. Lucy had no doubt, from the conversation repeated to her, that Burridge had resolved on making Jessica his heiress. What could be clearer? "You will be so much the poorer for it one day, dear Jessica, it is certain. Well, when it pleases heaven to remove him, poor fellow! I shall be much consoled if his wealth passes into your hands; and perhaps I may live to become a dependent cousin, sitting by your fire-side and nursing a succession of golden-haired——"

"Hush! hush!" said Jessy, blushing deeply, and quitting the room. But often did Lucy's interpretation of Burridge's meaning recur with a sense of comfort to her heart, less though from the future independence it seemed to promise, than because it drove away certain vague misgivings which his words, manners, and allusions had excited.

Dinner was served as soon as the girls made their appearance. Aurelia still kept her room; Sir William, who was of that nature which at once shrinks from asking a favour, and from shewing due gratitude for it when conferred, and who, now that the boon was promised, wished to take no further trouble about it, professed to be too ill to appear; but ere long, when all were engaged, he left his dressing-room and repaired to one of his clubs, where he dined, and being in good luck, won a considerable sum!

Lady Vernon, who having heard of Jessica's success, began to look upon the poor despised protégée as a person of growing influence, was, notwithstanding her own disappointment, gentle and affectionate in the extreme. She appeared to try to shake off an involuntary sadness, and whispered to Jessica, as she pressed her hand, that no private fears or sorrows of her own could make her forget all that she and her family owed her. And Jessy, forgiving, uncalculating, and merciful, seeing, as she

thought, the bitter struggle between real sorrow and assumed joy, doubly affecting in one habitually frivolous, promised her aunt to do her utmost on the morrow with Sir William to obtain the fifty pounds.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE evening passed on gaily enough. Lady Vernon now became really cheerful. Burridge seemed to have some secret source of gratulation, known only to himself, even after he had done ample justice to all his favourite dishes; for he fell into reveries, which frequently terminated in a sort of inward chuckle; he drew comparisons between himself, Delamere, Dempster, and even Sir William, and Marcus Vernon; comparisons both of person, dress, talent, conduct, manners,—in short everything, and in all he brought himself off a decided conqueror.

He paid Jessy as many attentions as a lady whose rivals were a good dinner, a comfortable sonably expect; and Jessy that her rivals were so many ar At her heart there was a glove the ashes of her recent sacrific offering on its altar had bee and that pride which in woma world holds most excusable. is such sacrifice underrated! V pilgrim, if we see him drag his b fainting form over burning was brakes, far from the cool gre the refreshing brook-yes, we but we heed not the pilgrimage spirit over unseen wastes, as so drear; we mark not how it shu more beguiling than that spring nor dream of all which it does a gion of one darling of his heart; but of the mute offering of those the heart's greatest darlings—of pride, vanity, selfishness—the world hears nothing. Its earthly eye follows the visible pilgrim with tears, and hails the palpable sacrifice with Pæans; but of the mental pilgrimage, and the heart's offering, it knows not; or, knowing, is too sense-enthralled to heed it.

When Jessica's excellent tea had roused Mr. Burridge from the drowsiness into which a more excellent dinner had sunk him, he assumed much of the sportiveness of that immortal donkey in the fable, who emulated the lap-dog.

He sung a variety of songs, all to one tune, or rather dirge; self-invited he repeated "The Chamelion," "The Three Warnings," Goldsmith's "Hermit," and a number of fables, learnt at school; and then finding he had still a fund of exuberant spirits, which he knew not what to do with, he proposed, if Lady Vernon would play, that himself, Lucy, and Jessica,

about no unnecessary graces-he with folded arms, engrossed en self, heedless whom he knocked kicked; and when, to his great tri Lucy and Jessy sink panting to ottoman, he cried out to Lady Ver hornpipe, can't you?" which she former of the old school, fortunat Mr. Burridge therefore concluded entertainment by one of those e formances in which toe-and-hee flings, Scotch steps, and all sorts and complicated horrors were exh the two girls, who mischievously co ridicule by exaggerated and ence plause!

## CHAPTER XIX.

withoutsome difficulty, procured from her uncle the fifty pounds for Lady Vernon; Mr. Burridge kept his word, and obtained the promise of his cousin's interest for Sir William and Marcus, and thereupon he grew more encroaching in his conduct to Jessica, and more overbearing in his manners to the Vernon family. Sir William again absented himself as of yore. Aurelia reappeared, if possible the lovelier for her recent seclusion; and Lady Vernon, having nothing further to hope from Jessy, returned to her habitual malevolence of feeling, and insolence of manner.

But to Jessica all this was immaterial. She

was engrossed by the first delights of authorship. She had discovered an exhaustless treasure in her own mind, and—sweeter rapture still!—she was expending it in the cause of him she loved with that mystic and ideal fervour, which belongs only to the dawn of a yet unacknowledged passion.

First love, and newly discovered genius!— How could the heart be gloomy, where burnt those dazzling flames!

The "Review" was read to Lucy, who heard it with wonder and delight. But no vain wish for fame mingled with Jessica's rapture. It was joy to her, by the light of her own genius, to lead worshippers to Delamere's shrine; yet for worlds she would not he, or any, should guess whence came that light. She felt an exulting pride in the new-born consciousness that she had a soul worthy of his own, but no vain wish to be the idol of the vain. How paltry such distinction to her who pants for the love of one noble, devoted heart!

Lucy, then, was to pass in the eyes of Burridge as the author of the review. To avoid detection, it was copied by a nephew of Flounce's,
who gained a scanty livelihood as a transcriber
of manuscripts; and giving Burridge, who, according to agreement, was not to see it till it
was printed, to understand that it was very
severe, he was easily induced to use his utmost
interest to get it into the next number of the

Review.

This—pleased with the idea of hurting the feelings of one whom he looked upon as a rival in many ways—he did so eagerly, that, although the Review was "made up," and within a few days of publication, a political article was cancelled, and the review of Delamere's poem proudly took its place, in a leading periodical of the day.

"Confound it!" said Burridge, "here's been some horrid blunder!" as he rushed in one morning, when Lucy and Jessica were alone at breakfast, with the Magazine yet wet from

or a beauty which he is not pro
the 'passion of Bulwer, and the 'passion of Bulwer, and the 'Wordsworth!' Confound it, Lo
composition?" and he seemed
"Not one word of it, upo
said Lucy, solemnly.
"Then, as I said before, the
confounded mistake. I'll go to
ask to see the manuscript: but
of it? It's too late, now! the cox
tion is made. Perhaps there mi
to get him cut up in the
only spread his fame: however

and get a sight of the manuscript by some poor hack or other who entirely engrossed, as an egettest ever as wind the subject that interests him at the time. But leaving to Lucy and Jessaca the Review, and the delightful task of reading in. How well is read—how admirable it looked in print—what magic influence it seemed to guin—how enquisite, how well chosen, were the entrans—how convincing the arguments. Such was Lucy's expressed, and Jessaca's inward, magnetion; and, in truth, it was a specified and nome outpouring from a heart whose holden from many wand of love.

In the evening Burnige rame upon. It had spent the day in the my-had gun us there wet—had caught cold—and was me a verticest humour. He had seen the manuscript. It was in a vulgar man's hand, and he had no hours it was by some hired had. Of Larger remew he could hear nothing: the efficie was our in town—the sub-editor II in hed—the men't

could only suppose that the wrong review had been printed in a mistake. "But it's too late now," he said: "every one I met was full of Delamere's poem. The Review's in every one's hand—it seems it's thought confoundedly clever, and, what enrages me most, is that I do believe, nay, I'm quite sure, that if I, Lucy, hadn't moved heaven and earth to get your article in, this abominable fulsome panegyric would never have appeared at all."

## CHAPTER XX.

EARLY on the morning which succeeded Delamere's interview with Mrs. Winter, and just before his departure for Brighton, he received a letter from that lady.

"The storm of passion has passed," she said, "and in my heart there is a calm. Heaven grant it may be that of reason, not of despair! But, be it as it may, hope—the delusive hope which has upheld me—has perished in the tempest. Forgive my rash expressions, wrung from me by the agony and disappointment of my heart—that heart now blesses you! You have acted with a noble frankness it has yet the power to appreciate; and love, which

friendship. Heaven bless you!

me or call on me at present,
meet again remember my only
that of loving you too well; an
that heart which, though a wome
to the friendship of him who has
vanity. May your fate be all I
may those prayers be heard
which are offered for you by,

"She is a noble creature, after lamere, as with moistened eye sh letter, "and her friendship is a honour!"

Few men could have declir without incurring her hate—butth

firmness in ourselves. Fully persuaded that he possessed in the highest degree all these desimble qualities, raised in his own esteem by his conduct in this affair, convinced that he could not only choose between the inexplicably charming Jessica, and the beautiful Aurelia, but among all the loveliest and best, and therefore need be in no hurry to decide, the esjent gâté of the world set out for Brighton. He had just read in the morning papers flattering paragraphs announcing the immediate appearance of an exquisite poem from the pen of one known hitherto rather as the darling of the Graces than the Muses; but now proved to be a very modern Crichton—the handsome -the elegant-the much admired Captain Delamere.

As he paced his study, awaiting Dempster, whom he had promised to drive down to Brighton, he not unfrequently stopped before the pier glasses, and while he viewed his tall, commanding form and countenance, lighted up by

ledged talent-these were all happiness of Delamere. In the beheld a happy home of dom when his present delights shoul fancied by its bright hearth, gardens, the winning Jessicaexquisite Aurelia: he thought to choose.-Dempster came: brightly on the hoar-frost; not ceed the perfection of the equi ness of the four greys; and De hand to appreciate and admire driving of Delamere. "Who sa happy world?" he cried. "WI has called it a mere state of pro so saying he flung a handful of ster!" he cried, "even they—they who have earth's worst portion for their own—even they are happy! See how their sun-burnt faces expand—look how fat and ruddy are they through their rags! A maudlin philosopher would whine about their bare feet hardened to the soil! their liberty is comfort compared with a tight boot—those rags luxury compared with the restraint of a fashionable's coat. Il s'agit de bien voir la chose et de la prendre du bon côté"

"Oh! of course they're deuced well off," agreed Dempster: "so is every body, if they would but think so—confoundedly well off!"—And in high spirits with themselves and all the world, the pair arrived at Brighton, sooner even than they had expected.

The Countess of Mandeville was a tall, fair, and elegant woman, about thirty-eight years of age; gentle almost to supineness, and with a degree of reserve about her which some attributed to pride, some to coldness. In general society it seemed as if nothing could

have to get rid of. Her boy, her c and her health, seemed to be h cupations and interests in life. many children, but had lost all save and fragile boy we have already Her husband had been dotingly f strange that such a piece of still life an interest; but to him, perhaps, thus. "Wise judges are we of each o does the warmest manner accompan heart: so I have known deep and i concealed beneath the proudest serve. Having been constantly petted by her husband, when she took to nursing and petting hers solitude to which she doomed here

deville Castle, during the first years

became sickly. Of a strong constitution, and requiring active exercise, she persuaded herself that she had no strength to walk;—fit to cope with a hurricane, she dreaded the slightest drught of air. She moved about in a gentle carriage from one seaport or chalybeate to another; but how could she hope to cure by air or medicine a disease merely imaginary? If she liked any one in the world, it was Delamere;—if she loved anything it, it was her boy; and those who marked her well might have seen her large dim blue eye dilate and fire, when rosy from a long ramble by the sea, the latter brought his hoard of wet sea-weed or shells to her sofa! might have seen her sodden complexion suffused with scarlet, if his childish scream were heard from his room above, and her fears for herself forgotten in an anxious watch by his bedside, when any unwonted degree of weakness alarmed the mother's heart!

The little Earl, who was eight years old, had one of those angel faces, kind and noble hearts,

and sweet tempers, which make us fear when we meet them, that what seems so fit for heaven will not long be left on earth. Though dazzlingly fair, with long locks of a golden auburn, large violet eyes, and a little ruby mouth, his beauty was rather that of an angel than a girl: there was nothing effeminate in his appearance, delicate as he was; no one ever mistook him for a girl, even when in earlier childhood his fantastic nurse delighted to adorn him with ribands, flowers, and laces; for he was her pride, and the envy of all who had to lug large, ugly, screaming burdens along:his beauty and his goodness were her constant boast. When her sweetheart offered to carry him, in order to relieve her, he neither cried nor kicked; and at the rendezvous of all the nurses and all the children, he seldom interrupted the long strings of "so says he, and so says she," and the stories of John's " petikelar attentions and cervilities," and "Missus's croolty and master's wiciousness," by adding his passionate roar to that of the other straw-hatted, abort-coated, incipient tyrants, furious at having to bear themselves, for a few minutes, the overfed burden which some poor girl has dragged for hours beneath a broiling sun; though to facilitate the doing so they had been considerately seated on the cool turf, and promised that pretty sun "if they would but hold their noise." Added to this, when he grew old enough to tell tales, he never availed himself of the power, and not only offered a share of all his cakes and sweetmeats, but insisted on its being accepted.

The arrival of Delamere was always a great event in the Mandeville family. The Countess roused herself, as much as her fancies and her doctors would permit. Egbert (the little Earl) was wild with joy, for he had a daring spirit, little in keeping with that of a fond mother and a fearful nurse; and with Delamere he was allowed to ride out, to go on the water, and to take long rambles by the sea.

The mother knew no fear when her darling v with Delamere; and Delamere told such am ing stories, and drew such fierce robbers, 1 such dreadful battles with soldiers and hore and even lions and tigers, and sung such me songs, and romped so kindly with him, made whips and whistles, and bows and arro -that his visit was a succession of deligh Miss Tadpole, too, the Countess's compani a lady of five-and-forty, who dressed à la je fille, and whose spirit of coquetry had surviv her charms, was glad to exhibit what she : considered such to something more than 1 occasional physician and the diurnal apothec -to talk to more attentive ears than those her patroness of poor dear Sir Joseph, her fath (who had been a burly city knight,) and who with great dexterity, she dragged in, head : shoulders, on all occasions; considering t the disgrace of being a professed toady merged in the glory of being daughter of "p dear Sir Joseph." Instead of a solitary bre fast, dinner, &c. she now, most consequentially, did the honours for one of the handsomest, most amusing, and well-bred of men, who never failed to imply his admiration of her gaudy dress, and privately took a mischievous delight in encouraging her to make it daily more fantastic, girlish, and absurd; so that at last Miss Tadpole had arrived, for evening wear, at what he had hinted was the perfection of simplicity—a crop, a white frock, a blue sash, and a coral necklace!

Miss Tadpole had been handsome, and she had never forgotten it. Now, alas! her once slight figure was become somewhat scraggy, her complexion rather too florid, and she was obliged to resist (by calling in the purchased aid of regiments of black ringlets) the incursion of the greys; but still her brown eyes were bright and good-humoured; still, through a veil, her face looked tolerably handsome; and still, being straight and thin, her figure had a sort of youthfulness in a morning dress, which atoned to her for the absence of a more becoming

degree of embonpoint. In mind she was what she had ever been, very vain, very boasting, and a toady,-but she was a kind-hearted one. A lady who wished to get rid of her, had recommended her to the Countess, who wanted some one to sort her worsteds, begin her carpet work, read the paper to her, listen to her imaginary ailments, praise her boy, and write an occasional note or letter. Though not at first much to the Countess's taste, having once gained a footing, Miss Tadpole was too useful and attentive, and her patroness too indolent and amiable, for any change; and in this comfortable home she remained undisturbed, except by an occasional day dream, prompted by a glance from a doctor, a protracted squeeze of the hand from an apothecary, a call from the curate,-or a visit from Delamere.

When the latter arrived, having learnt that the little Earl was fast recovering, he did not feel inclined to doom himself for the whole day to Miss Tadpole's attentions; so he amused

himself till about seven in the evening in Brighton. His heart reproached him for the delay, when he saw, eagerly watching for him, from the windows of the beautiful villa in the suburbs where they abode, and where he had been watching for hours, the pale face of the boy, and felt his little heart beat with delight as he rushed into his arms. The Countess had had herself removed from her dressing-room to her drawing-room sofa; she was clad in a shawl and wrapper, propped up by pillows, and fortified by paregoric elixir. Miss Tadpole had put a white rose in her hair, curled à l'enfant; and had dressed herself in a blue gauze frock, with short sleeves, blue kid gloves, and shoes to match

"I scarcely know how to thank you for coming to me," said the Countess, forgetting her invalidship in her real emotion; "but thank Heaven, he is better now! It has been a dreadful attack on the lungs; and I, in my state, (as Miss Tadpole will tell you,) up two

Heaven!" and she sank be pushing off a large shawl, and tippet, with which Miss Tadpo encumbered him in the present seated himself on Delamere's ling his little wan hand on hi him to tell him how Neptune were, and whether the calf a grown into a cow, (as he has would do) and whether hirds

would do), and whether birds out of the eggs in the nest of bush he had found and spared.

"See how animated he le

Countess to Miss Tadpole:
my dear. Oh, Heaven! I for
fever—what think you?"

"I think

offering her a box of lozenges, and a bottle of sale. "You know you ought not to speak, on account of your lungs; nor to take too much interest in anything, while your nerves in this state. I must repeat to you what Mr. Bolus said only two hours ago, 'Miss Tadpole,' said he, 'quiet is every thing!'—As the ancient orator said, 'action, action, action;' I say for her ladyship, 'quiet, quiet, quiet.' You ought to be in bed, my lady, indeed you ought," added Miss Tadpole, mournfully shaking her head.

Well, my dear Tadpole, I believe you are right; but still I feel better for this little exertion. I think I shall lie here while you and Osmond dine; and take a cup of tea with you when you come up: do you think that could do me any harm?"

wanted to get rid of the restraint of her preence. "It's a false strength, springing from excitement—that's all. It was just the same "Well, my dear Tadpole, I'm sure I wish to conform in every thing, and not to distress any one; so if you'll ring for Garnet, I'll go to bed: only just before you retire, look in upon Egbert, and feel his pulse, and come and tell me how he seems."

"You must not forget your draught tonight."

"Not for one night? It makes me feel so ill; and I want to get up to-morrow, as Delamere is here."

"Now, my lady!" and Miss Tadpole put on a half-crying, half-imploring face. "Should any thing interfere? I ask your own excellent judgment. As Bolus said to me the last thing—fthree table spoonfuls of the mixture, night and morning; a pill every two hours, and a powder in the middle of the day: depart the least in the world,' said he, 'my dear Miss Tadpole, and I cannot answer for the consequences'—Bolus's own words!" and Miss Tadpole sighed and hung her head.

with poor dear Sir Joseph! always fancying himself better, and so making himself worse; always wanting to sit up to tea. Why, a few days before he died, the Lord Mayor was dining with us—and he would come down to tea; aye, and had supper too. I do believe, the next day he couldn't speak . . . . "

"Yes; but I am only nervous, and perhaps a little consumptive: that was a case of confirmed disease."

"Oh! yes, my dear Countess; you don't fancy I mean to compare the cases—only to shew you what excitement will do. La! bless me, poor dear Sir Joseph was a man of seventy—of a full habit, dropsical, gouty, and phthisical; and you, a young creature in the bloom of life, with nothing, as Bolus says, but a tendency to consumption, and a nervous disorder. But then a tendency (as Bolus says) requires more care than a disease: that makes me so careful, and perhaps you think officious; but I hear those words of Bolus's ringing in my ears night and day—they do distress me so."

"Well, my dear Tadpole, I'm sure I wish to conform in every thing, and not to distress any one; so if you'll ring for Garnet, I'll go to bed: only just before you retire, look in upon Egbert, and feel his pulse, and come and tell me how he seems."

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"Well, bring it to me when you come. See how proud my boy looks on his cousin's knee! and so sensible and clever, that even Osmond finds him quite a companion.—Good night, and God bless you both," she faltered, as leaning on Miss Tadpole, she offered her hand to Delamere, and stooped to kiss her child.—Delamere rose to open the door, and before she could avert her face, he saw the wet tears upon her cheek.

## CHAPTER XXI.

To most men of fashion, the first evening he spent at the villa, and those which succeeded it, would have been tedious in the extreme; but to Delamere, a pencil and a sheet of paper, a book, a musical instrument, were charms against cousin, and delighted to see his eyes sparkle with joy and affection. The Countess, too, albeit rich and noble, was, he felt, much to be pitied: alone in the world—that worst sort of malade, "la malade imaginaire,"—surrounded by those whose interest it was to deceive her. Although he felt that any attempt at proving to herself that she was not a sufferer would be

his presence was a source of to the gloomy heart of the wi when disposed to mirth, he h with her affectations and vi him; and in his now not un the sea and the moon (be glory from the drawing-room his vague fancies clothed th form of Jessics Fhornton, an music of the waves formed a m paniment to the advent of his and beauty.

;

\*Come, now, really you m that window any longer; you' dear Sir Joseph—he'd stand watching a thing till be pole; who knew very well he had never seen the see in his life, "but he'd stand gazing at saything that took his fancy, by the hour."

Ah! at one of his own drays, or bales of goods, thought Delamere, as finding his reveile so hatefully broken up, he returned to the freside with Miss Tadpole. "Where's Egbert?"

"Oh! I've got him off to bed, by telling him, you desired him to go; and he made me promise to tell you that if he woke in the nagical he should remember dear Osmood was come, and be quite happy;" and Miss Tadpoie cast down her eyes, and looked ludicrously confused.

"Is that a natural rose in your hair. Miss Tadpole?"

"I'm very glad you are obliged to ask the question," replied the lady, with a simper: "I thought you London beaux could always distinguish the natural from the artificial rose."

"I have no hesitation in saying that if that

London, and the days of poor dear Sir Joseph.

There are women enough here, as every where, but very few men. I think there were a much greater number of men, visiting men, I mean,

I dare say more visited you some twenty some years ago?"

"The war, I think, cut off many of the best years ago, thought Delamere.

and most gallant men," sighed Miss Tadpole.

But while she had been lamenting the pancity of beaux a plan had almost matured itself in her companion's head, from which he doubted not she would derive much pleasure and he a good deal of fun.

"There is a young friend of mine here," he said, "rich, idle, susceptible, to whom the society of an accomplished woman would be a real advantage. As a cavalier he might be made useful; will you allow me to introduce him?"

Miss Tadpole bowed a delighted assent.

She then asked Delamere to sing; and having once placed an exquisite guitar in his hand, he wish to draw out an antiquated flirt: but he had no idea of doing penance for his joks.

"I am glad you like my rose: it was a style I alopted, you know, by your advice; and this dress I had made exactly like the white one which you used to admire; and these are some of the gloves and shoes you sent me from Paris."

"They are much honored: but where is the coral necklace I used to admire so?"

"What, your keepsake? Oh, I will wear it to-morrow: but it does not do with a blue frock."

"Then I must get you one that will. What is there, in the same style, that would do?"

"A white cornelian."

Delamere took out his tablets and noted down a white cornelian necklace for Miss Tadpole,

"You lead a very retired life here, I fear?"

"Yes, dull in the extreme. I often sigh for

London, and the days of poor dear Sir Joseph. There are women enough here, as every where, but very few men. I think there were a much greater number of men, visiting men, I mean, some years ago?"

I dare say more visited you some twenty years ago, thought Delamere.

"The war, I think, cut off many of the best and most gallant men," sighed Miss Tadpole.

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Miss Tadpole bowed a delighted assent.

She then asked Delamere to sing; and having once placed an exquisite guitar in his hand, her charms were not potent enough to withdraw it.

Songs, retreats, marches, and waltnes follewed each other, till Miss Tadpole, indignant
at laving herself invoked the rival who had
edipsed her, after a few unheeded hints about
the charms of conversation, and the danger of
ting his voice, and so forth, gathered up her
wanteds, coldly bade him good night, and went
in no very good humour to bed.

• 5 best them is smoot to enter the event of up = newspaper, the heart of growie et a charing left the bas is dearing comprehension by the behind. Together with me same the first law, but the masy chair, sent the oil into a greatle at he from which he had been received by a conciting to believe it therefore the party of increase one trying to believe it the party of increase one trying to believe it the party of increase.

his little cousin, Delamere, to avoid Miss. Tadpole's wearisome attentions, strolled into Brighton, he found Dempster trying to kill an hour in the public library. This he had almost effected beyond his most sanguine expectations, for after raffling for two or three pencil-cases, and winning one of doubtful metal, with a clumsy black seal, on which appeared an open pair of scissors, with the motto "we part to meet again," he had tried a flirtation with a smart shop-girl, in which he got on pretty well, till disconcerted by the arrival of an admirer of the damsel's, whom she found more entertaining.

spaper, the leading article of which to this wondering comprehension far together with the sun, the fire, and air, sent him off into a gentle dose, to he had been awakened by some to remove the paper, a few minutes lamere espied him. The wish of else to read it determined him to paper; and he had recommenced his study of the leading article, when, reet Delamere, it at length fell into so of his watchful assailant.

Dempster, how are you?"

are you, Delamere?" For till he

that, Dempster could not decide how

aself.

well, to be sure; who could be in this lovely place, with this bracing



"I—I feel up to any thing! I was never in such spirits in my life; the worst of it is I don't know what to do with myself. How do you amuse yourself at the Countess's? No flirtation with her, have you?"

"No, no. She's Diana and June in one or better still, a noble-minded, pure-hearted Englishwoman; but yet there is, I must own; a lady in the case."

"Ah! I thought as much," said Dempster, proud of the confidence of one whom he looked up to and copied.

"Not a woman that you would admire, I dare say, Dempster. A woman rather in the summer than the spring of her charms. You, I believe, like nothing but girls."

"I—I hate girls—silly, namby-pamby things! One's obliged to dance with them, and hand them things, and all that, but I often think, with Byron, that they smell of bread and butter."

"They want tact - their minds, persons,

He had then lounged to the table and taken ap a newspaper, the leading article of which having left "his wondering comprehension far behind," together with the sun, the fire, and an easy chair, sent him off into a gentle dose, from which he had been awakened by some one trying to remove the paper, a few minutes before Delamere espied him. The wish of some one else to read it determined him to retain the paper; and he had recommenced his hopeless study of the leading article, when, rising to greet Delamere, it at length fell into the clutches of his watchful assailant.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Well, Dempster, how are you?"

had heard that, Dempster could not decide how he was himself.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Very well, to be sure; who could be otherwise in this lovely place, with this bracing air and bright sun? Don't you feel quite a new man? Look at that glorious sea after the mud and fogs of London!"

you amuse yourself at the Cou flirtation with her, have you?"

"No, no. She's Diana and J or better still, a noble-minded, Englishwoman; but yet there is a lady in the case."

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"Not a woman that you wo dare say, Dempster. A woman summer than the spring of her c I believe, like nothing but girls."

"I—I hate girls—silly, a things! One's obliged to dance and hand them things, and all the manners—all want forming, and if one does not like to take that trouble, why a woman of maturer charms, who knows the world, is preferable—I can well conceive George the Fourth's taste for 'fat, fair, and forty.'"

- "So can I, I never liked a woman yet who was under forty, not in my heart: wee the difference between a soft, winning, elegant creature, like Mrs. Winter, and a pert, flippant, thing like Jessica Thornton!"
- "Well, the lady I speak of is the very antipodes of Miss Thornton. She is a friend of the Countess's, who is living with her—Miss Tadpole; not wealthy, but the daughter of Sir Joseph Tadpole: you've heard of him?"
- "Of course," said Dempster, who thought from Delamere's manner, he ought to have heard of him; and who being of a rich pervenue family, thought a good deal of any kind of title.
- "Well, this girl, or rather this charming woman, for it's wronging her to call her a girl,

- w nat, will you introduce

" I've half a mind to do so.

" Oh! do!"

"Well, remember what know we've very different Dempster, are not like me: if the world may blame or praiseworld: but you would not like desperately in love with a wo your senior, without a sou. I man to brave the world-you'ı to do a foolish thing; and pe right. We are very unlike each "Oh! are we, though. Now that I think like you on almost

and I am the very man to brave

\_\_\_ /1

your chance; but remember, I've warned you.

If you will ride over to the villa this evening,
I will request Miss Tadpole to permit me to
introduce you to her; but no airs—your fine
women are as proud as Lacifer—and 20 love—
making: it's not a match for you! Good bye
—I'm off—à ce noir!"

"Not a match for me!" said Dempater, as he walked to the library glass, and arranged his air, his hat, and his neckcloth, just as he had remarked that Delamere's were adjusted. "No match for me, eh!—but one for you. I suppose. We shall see that; but I see no reason why you are to engress and appropriate every fine woman you meet — Arrelia Vernon, Mrs. Winter, the Counters, every successive debutante, to say nothing of that little pert Jessica, and now this splendid creature, who will be, I foresee, quite to my taste. No, no, my boy; for once I may outsur you Perhaps, too, she may have a good fortune. Delamere's deuced cunning,—it's evident ne

wants to keep me off: but we shall see. I hope Story has sent down my dress-coat, made exactly after his, and that Hamlet has imitated his chain pretty well. Oh! it's quite evident that he wants to keep me off; but I'm too much for him!"

So argued the futile imitator, forgetting that had Delamere really wished to keep him away, he need not have introduced him at all.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

It was an important evening for Miss Tadpole: Delamere had announced the intended visit of Dempster, and that with remarks and innuendos which had revived many a half-withered hope. A man of fortune! His own master! A man who despised girls! One who preferred the full-blown rose to the paltry bud—a man too who had heard of poor dear Sir Joseph!—Miss Tadpole was too bewildered to decide for herself. So she consulted Delamere; and the crop, the white frock, the blue sash, and the coral necklace, with the addition of one white rose on the brow, were decided upon between them. This was a somewhat

sure he took in playing the quite decided how the affa that was to depend on the Dempster was rich and i Tadpole poor and depende he felt inclined, when he m hopes, to bring Dempster a for he felt he had as entire him as if he were his bondpole certainly scarcely deser fortune; but still she had e pretty well,-perhaps :- he rate, it was an amusement himself; and, even if it car flirt of thirty seasons would 1 but all the better, in her ow and names: humaness of some or respect some less describ inserted annuar mer next next some large part in the source transport less had never some the source of mer eventure as defaul, her choose as panis, mer int as account. In what we transport to mer insert as account. In the source in a country in the merit into an inice insert one was a meaning like into an inice insert me was a meaning like interest as some in the mere inmostly five instance in some int.

The Comment has rement with a strength of the strength of the

By the Counters o series, the stage was set for Man Tampus o management the set of the series of the

run to his bonne, insisting on being made very smart, too. And when he came down, his delicate cheek flushed with excitement, his long golden hair hanging in smooth curls upon his shoulders, dressed in a little green velvet surtout with a point-lace collar, and a gold chain borrowed from "Taddy," Osmond caught him to his heart, with almost paternal pride and love, and thought, for the fiftieth time that day, how much he resembled Jessica.

Miss Tadpole was too much taken up with her own beauty to care much about the boy's; but it struck her for a moment that perhaps she should look more bewitching if, upon Mr. Dempster's entrance, Egbert were on her knee. She therefore placed him there, and gazed at the opposite glass; but the contrast of her made-up complexion, marked features, and artificial charms, with the fresh and flower-like loveliness of the little boy, struck her with dismay, and hastily putting him down, she commenced diminishing the

by Delamere that she had never looked so lovely, when Mr. Dempster was announced.

At first we must own a blank look of disappointment stole over his face as he gazed on Miss Tadpole. Could that be the beauty? Oh! yes, Delamere introduced her as his lovely friend, the charming Miss Tadpole. Then, too, Delamere was dressed as for a court ball: of coune that was for the purpose of captivating Miss Tadpole, and outshining himself; and he was dressed very plainly, just as he had remarked Delamere had been when at the play with the Vernons.

Miss Tadpole spoke.—" It is a frosty night, Mr. Dempster; but, indeed, we do not mean to give you a frosty reception. My poor friend, the Countess of Mandeville, is confined to her room by indisposition, but she bids me welcome you with double cordiality, for herself and me!"

At the facetious play upon the word frosty,

Delamere had laughed, and said, "Very good;" he had smiled as she laid a stress on the double welcome, and his whole manner was that of an admirer applauding a recognised wit: She's deuced clever, thought Dempster.

"How shall I thank you for your graceful reception of my friend?" murmured Delamere, as Dempster turned to Egbert. "Ah! he must steel his heart."

"Or, perhaps, it may be stolen," simpered Miss Tadpole.

"Brava! brava!" said Delamere.

She's a wonderful woman, thought Dempster, who had heard every word.

"Do not let the envious fire scorch those lilies and roses," said Delamere, handing her a screen.

She has a lovely complexion, thought Dempster.

"I believe you knew poor dear Sir Joseph, Mr. Dempster?" sighed Miss Tadpole.

"I—I—yes—no—I didn't exactly know him myself, but I—I know many who did."

"He was well known! It is strange how much you remind me of him. Oh! that one could forget! but yet I like to be reminded of him too. You really are so like him—the eyes particularly!"

Mr. Dempster would not, perhaps, have looked so proud, had he known that the Sir Joseph, to whom he bore so marvellous a resemblance, was an old apoplectic Falstaffian gentleman, with the nose of a Bardolph, and eyes that looked a hundred ways at once.

"I hope," said Captain Delamere, in an under tone to Miss Tadpole, "I hope the likeness does not distress you; with your great sensibility, I can conceive so strong a resemblance—but I am quite sure that if it affects you, Dempster will not take it amiss if I request him to retire."

Oh! hang it! thought Dempster, who had just made himself very comfortable, and whose tea tasted peculiarly well out of a china cup with the Mandeville coronet on it—Oh! confound

it, she has very fine feelings, I see; but I hope she won't take that into her head—I shall not appear to hear it. La! just when I've got the entrée of one of the first houses in England—none of your tag-rag-and-bobtail nobility, but one of the very élite——What shall I do?

However, he was soon reassured, for Miss Tadpole, turning playfully to Delamere, said, "Ah! I see through you—you want to have the field to yourself, you know you do! but I won't have my new beau driven away: I'm up to a thing or too, as Sir Joseph used to say in sporting phrase."

"Like the maiden in the fairy tale, a pearl or a diamond every time you open those coral lips," said Osmond.

She has very red lips, and is astoundingly clever! How she gives it to Delamere! he's desperately in love with her, that's quite evident! I never saw him so devoted in my life: and really she is a wondrous fine woman! She has good taste, too. Why, in spite

of all his attentions, I'm much mistaken if she doesn't admire me! So, so, Delamere, my boy! for once I may steal a march upon you.

Thus thought Dempster, and Osmond read each shallow idea as it traced itself on his vacant countenance: and then came music, and Omnond lauded a voice which rivalled the screech-owl; then some loud, thundering sonatas, played by Miss Tadpole, so old as to be quite new to Dempster; and Dempster fondled and romped with Egbert, because, though he hated children, Egbert was a little Earl: and walks and rides were adroitly planned, with apparently unwilling jealousy on the part of Osmond; and after an elegant petit souper, e flippant cockneyisms from Miss Tadpole, some champagne-prompted compliments from Dempster, and a well-acted fit of silent jealousy from Osmond, Dempster tore himself away; and, as he left the villa, said to himself, "She's the finest woman in the world, and has better taste, and more wit, than any one whom

it was ever my lot to meet! I do think I propose at once: 't would be capital to cut Delamere out. Ah! and she likes me too, of I've no penetration and no knowledge of women. I suspect Delamere's entangled in some way, and can't come forward :- dangerous thing to introduce me, if that's the case! I think I'd take her name, Sir Joseph having been so well known. Tadpole Dempster sounds well: perhaps she may have influence enough to get me knighted-she has a world of wit and tact! Lucky my name's Joseph, too. Sir Joseph Tadpole Dempster! and then one might drop the Dempster, and I should pass for the next in descent. Ah! Delamere, my boy, you're outwitted for once !"

While all this was passing in Dempster's mind, Miss Tadpole, as she removed her clustering ringlets and her snowy rose, said to herself, "Thank heaven! he's caught: Delamere seems taken, too! but there's no fixing him—

no, no, he must be only a tool to bring Dempster on: it's a pity, too, such a noble creature!

Ah! but a bird in the hand ——Well, after all, I shall sot die an old maid!"

Delamere's soliloquy, on the other hand, was: "She is mean, but he is meaner;—she is a fool, but he is a greater;—she is vain, but he is vainer;—she is a poor, dependent, good-hearted creature, supporting an old apoplectic mother, and a little humpbacked sister, in a great measure out of her savings, he a rich, self-sufficient, inflated noodle! He will lose nothing, but will get a good housekeeper; and she will gain much, in a worldly point of view, though wedded to a fool. She shall have him,—and I shall get rid of him!"

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#### THI

# MARRYING MAN.

#### CHAPTEL

It was a bright morning. The trees in the square were glittering with marriant the sky was deeply blue, the san seemed to have put on his birthday suit to welcome the new year, people hurried along, with "shiring morning faces," laden with the offerings of interest or affection, and greeted each other, as they passed, with that wish which seldom yet has been realised—"a happy new year!" One almost fancied, in the freshness of the morning breeze, that one felt the buoyancy of the new pair of wings old Time had just put on—wings

Lorary, and in test and bou

from beaux of all countries tention. Aurelia, more love whose shrine by far the gr offerings were laid, was exan beautiful smile of self-comp of triumph.

While the reader has been Tadpole at Brighton, Aure completed a very important young nobleman who had be with her at the play, has obtation. One of her bouquets nucopia, on which his mot beau" is beautifully formed copy of very poor verses.

better match than Delamere: true, he is a sambler, a roue, and a fool; he is said to be in debt; but, then, he is a viscount. Ah! but Delamere is not in debt, and may one day be ear! Lord Belville's fortune is not equal to Delamere's actual one, and Delamere, at the death of a sickly child, will have forty thousand year: these are calculations which perplex the beautiful Aurelia, and even her mamma is be wildered.

Meantime, Jessica and Lucy are amusing themselves with flowers and bon-bons, and at this moment each lady receives a new present.

a cadeau far surpassing all yet offered—a case of the choicest Parisian bon-bons for each. And on opening a secret spring in the bonbonnière, Aurelia discovers a splendid cameo, representing Paris offering the golden apple to Venus; Lucy.

a most elegant ornament composed of violets and evergreen, in different zems, as emblematic of her lasting and modest worth; Lady Ver-

non, a bracelet miniature of Marcus; and sica, a small and very elegantly bound vol

While her aunt and cousins were loud in the admiration of their presents, Jessica, silent, but with a beating heart, examined hers. "The Beauties of ——; collected by O. D. and dedicated to J. T."

O. D. of course was Osmond Delamere, and J. T. must be Jessica Thornton—collected for, and dedicated to her! Oh! what were all the jewels of Gamschid, had he offered them to her beauty, compared to this delicate tribute to her genius and her taste! And whose were these Beauties? They were those of a poet Jessica and Delamere had often admired together, one at once the most gifted and the most popular writer of these days! We will not name him—already the hollow heart of Envy suggests that name to the pale lips of Hate; but far, far more generally does Truth proclaim it to the thousand tongues of Fame. The "two hosts—his friends and foes"—both know that name as well as if its

magic characters were written here! And Jessy knew and loved it well; their mutual appreciation of that poet had been one of the first links between herself and Delamere. How delicate an attention was this! True, she might have ed, as Johnson did when "Shakespeare's Beauties" were collected in one book, "Where the nine other volumes?" but in this choice bouquet from that garden of beauty, the poet's mind, how much of scattered excellence was ondensed—how much taste, too, had the collector shown! And that was not for Jessy's heart the least merit of her book-no pains had been spared, no source unvisited, from "the weeds and wild flowers" of the poet's boyhood. from the gorgeous blossoms which had ripened beneath the tropical sun of early youth and hope, and from those dreams of sweet philosophy and heavenly faith which, like the nightblowing cereus, steal out in the darkness of the spirit—that darkness early and irremediable grief alone can bring—that darkness caused by the studden eclipse, not the gradual setting of the sun of happiness:—from all these enchanting sources had Delamere patiently brought what seemed the costliest gerns, the richest fruits, the fairest flowers; and, like Medons, where not sure, pleased, but perplexed,

#### " Had cull'd of such as seem'd the fairest."

What was it to Jessica, that Lady Vernon looked from her own and her daughter's glittering offerings with a glance of contemptuous commiseration on the little volume; and even if she had known that that book, printed as it was expressly for Jessica, and the types broken up after three copies had been struck off-with the exquisite likeness of the poet engraved expressly for the book—even if she had known that in actual money Jessy's present had thus cost as much as all the others put together-her contemptuous pity would only have changed its object; and Delamere would have seemed to her a fit denizen of St. Luke's. All books she disliked and despised: but if any one could have ound favour in her eyes, it must have been

some gorgeous Annual, or Book of Beauty or of Gems, something large, and richly gilt and embellished: but a small volume, bound in dark morocco—Well! Delamere had shown his estimate of Jessica's insignificance; and Jessica bending over her book, pale, and her eyes full of tears she sought to hide, Jessica seemed to feel the difference, and that was some comfort.

The beautiful Aurelia glanced at the book, and shared her mother's opinion and feeling; only not being quite so unamiable, she was rather sorry to see Jessy so affected, and did not ask to look at her present: but Lucy, bent over her cousin, at one glance perceived the whole, and, pressing her hand, whispered a few words, not of comfort, but congratulation.

"But, mamma," said Lucy, "do you think we ought to accept these elegant presents? bon-bons, or flowers, no one could refuse, or even a little book, like Jessica's; but expensive ornaments I really think we ought to decline."





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"On any other occasion, I should agree with you, Lucy; but as mere anonymous étrennes du nouvel an, I think it would be prudish and affected to show any scruple."

"Very affected, indeed, I think," said Aurelia, who had just discovered that her cameo brooch was an extremely becoming fastening to her black mantilla; "if only one had been distinguished in this manner, I should think with Lucy; but as you are all included (even Jessica), I must say, I think we ought to feel much flattered."

"I suppose," said Lucy, "Mr. Burridge will be here presently. Jessica and myself told him he must come laden with bon-bons, and..."

The door was thrown open, and in came Mr. Burridge, carrying several odd-looking whity-brown parcels, and followed by Tim, with two large brown paper bags.

Some attempt seemed to have been made at the door by the Vernons' butler to prevent the incursion of Tim; but Tim, who had an immense organ of self-esteem, considered he need not be ashamed to show himself anywhere, and resisted the well-bred butler's efforts to detain him, with a vehemence which sent him into the room with so sudden a bounce, that he lost his hold of his large brown paper bags, and, to his great confusion, their contents, namely, two dozen immense oranges, which Burridge had cheapened from a Jew, in a manner yet to be seen, rolled all over the room.

All burst into an irrepressible fit of laughter at Burridge's rage, Tim's dismay, and the curious offering thus so suddenly disclosed.

- "Confound you, ye careless scoundrel!" said Burridge.
- "I ax your pardons, sur, and ladies, but it warn't my fault," said Tim, ready to cry.
- " Not your fault, you vagabond!" said Burridge.
- "No, sur, it war Mr. Johnson's fault, sur: he wanted to purvent my comin in, although I told him I'd your petikelar orders to stick close to you till you'd guve the present, which I natural

ans matting a.

wished to do, known if any reason with a life of the blamed."

- "Hold your saucy tongue, you dog: said Burridge, enraged to see the extreme merriment his own wrath and Tim's excuses occasioned.
- "They an't none the worserer, mum," said
  Tim, rapidly picking them up, and giving them,
  as he did so, a wipe and a polish on the sleeve
  and knees of his suit, which having belonged
  to a predecessor of smaller dimensions was
  curiously scanty, glazed, and worn; but in
  kneeling and stooping to pick up the oranges,
  which had rolled away in all directions, Tim's
  scanty attire cracked and burst in several
  places: at this awful moment he was close to
  Burridge picking up an orange, which had
  rolled under his chair.
- "Ye scoundrel! ye'll be the ruin of me!" said Burridge, inexpressibly provoked, both at the injury to Tim's livery, and the increased mirth which it occasioned; "not satisfied with the ruin of my property in one way, throwing about expensive oranges, as if they were so much

## THE MARRIES MAY

birth you must spoil your good livery, just when it is new done up at a great expense. Get our passion.

Burnidge pushed the kneeding I'm with its hope foot.

Ton started to his feet, outpie with massion. for one moment. he comment his mark hand and glared out of his red eve. our suchiemen. the some nobler orators, appearing in remiler the superiority of condensed renom and points areasm to violent wrath, he deliberates wined the orange he had must messed under more it a final polish on his sleeve, and mineral total the table, said with dignity. " They in a none of them the worserer, my lady " Then, maning to Burridge, " and now I gives you warran. and I'll just tell you a piece if no mine--! dont valv your place not that that the snapped his fingers: " and as to spoilin my livery, you took care of that, for it was small afore I ever come near it: the irst iat i warn't good for nothin, but was the meanest. holiest, darnedest old soot as ever I seed. and as for ruinin your property in them oranges, by good rights they was all mine, for you give the Jew them old grey trowsus for 'em, as you'd promised me agin and agin, if I'd rub ye down; and I rubbed you down beautiful, as any one may see; and then you goes and changes away the trowsus, after I'd spoke about 'um to Mr. Macbotcher." At this climax of his wrongs, Tim's feelings quite overcame him, and taking an old red remnant of one of Burridge's handkerchiefs out of his napless hat, he burst into sobs, in which "them trowsus, the Jew," and "Mr. Macbotcher," were the only articulate words.

Meanwhile the Vernons had been so convulsed with laughter, and Burridge so paralysed with rage, that Tim had been allowed to proceed.

"Get out!" growled Burridge, " or I'll have you kicked out; and remember—you're no longer my servant!"

"Your suvvant! No, I've been that too long, I'm thinking," said Tim, a sense of his

own value drying his tears: "your suvvant! Why you don't know how to behave to a good suvvant, when you've got him! But I calls all the leddies to witness 'twar I as guve you warnin!"

"Get out! I tell you again!" said Burridge, pale and choking with rage.

"I'm a goin! I gives you warnin, and I tells you a piece of my mind—you'll never get another suvvant to compare to me—for five pounds a year! All the suvvants in the street says as how you've took adwantage of my youth and inexpedience, too! And when you're ill, to live on grule and broth, besides its being little enough you leaves when you're well! And when I com'd, you was as rough as any colt, and now you're as beautiful smooth as can be—and then to change away them trowsus!... I've been a good suvvant to you, and you've been a crule master to me! But all I wants is my wages and my character, and my own soot, as is worth more nor this,

and as I'm a free-born Briton, I'll have my own!"

So saying, Tim bowed to the ladies, and stalked out of the room.

It was some time before the united efforts of all could restore Burridge to any degree of equanimity; however, at last he recovered himself sufficiently to bring forward his comical whity-brown bags, which during this time had remained on the table.

- "There, none of your fine French bon-bons, made up of chalk and sugar of lead, are to compare to these!" And pompously opening the papers, he disclosed a bag of large Valencia pudding-raisins, another of currants, one of ginger-bread nuts, and one of the obsolete lollypops and bulls'-eyes now so seldom seen even among village dainties.
- "There, there's a paper a piece for you,"
  he said, taking a few of the contents out of
  each bag, cramming them into his own mouth,
  and then pushing the bags towards the ladies:

"and the oranges are between you all! Here, taste this, my lady," he said, handing her a lolly-pop with his own hand, and Lady Vernon, fearing to offend him, was obliged to convey it to her well vermillioned lip. "Here, Aurelia, try these;" and he poked into her unwilling hand a pinch of the raisins, which she too dared not decline. "Jessica, taste these ginger-bread nuts; and you, Lucy, tell me what you think of these oranges;" and he commenced pealing one with a rind two inches thick.

Lucy rejoiced to see they had a coat which must have sheltered them from the contamination of Tim, the Jew, and all other assailants they might have met with, since they were brought from the warm groves of St. Michael's; and insisting that Mr. Burridge should keep for himself the one he had peeled, she courageously seized on another. "I never peel them for myself," said Burridge, "I'm not so over-nice. Here, Lady Vernon, Aurelia, Jessica—ah! you're all provided, I see!" For

each, dreading that the one he had prepared might be offered to her, had valiantly appropriated one, and commenced an attack upon it.

"Come, I'm glad you like them; you see took your hint, Lucy. Here, taste these raisins. I'm like Shelley, I don't think any of your dainties equal to oranges, currants, and raisins. Don't eat too many at a time," he added, again filling his own mouth; "everything's very dear this winter."

Lady Vernon, Lucy, and Aurelia now proudly produced their presents, which he did his best to disparage and under-rate — Jessica alone hung back: "And what have you got, Jessy?" he said, going towards her.

- "Some bon-bons and flowers, and a little book," said Jessy, drawing her present away, for she shrank from his investigating it.
- "A little book! a fine present, truly; and what is this book?"
  - " A collection of the Beauties of --"
  - "Ah, I hate your Beauties! generally the

most trumpery parts of the works of some cox comb or other. Poor Jessy! never mind it: fine jewels to others, and a little paltry book to you. You've been shamefully treated, Jessy: but I'll make it up to you! Let's see the book. Ah! never mind," as Jessy involuntarily snatched it away, " not if it vexes you, Jess! put it up, by all means. There, don't fret," he said, in a low voice, misinterpreting the tears that filled Jessy's eyes, as she hastily locked the book up in her desk, "it's enough to enrage vou: but it will be none the worse for you, child.—A puppy! to send you such trash; you, who deserve the best he could get. If he'd sent you a handsome shawl, or a watch, or something that might have been useful to you in after life! To show such a preference to the others as that !-Ah! they shan't triumph long! Good-bye to you all, for the present! Now, don't eat too much at a time," he said, helping himself to a final handful of the raisins, "they're very rich: I never saw such raisins in my life! I must take another of those lolly-

## CHAPTER II.

"Come here, Aurelia," said Lady Vernon, as a little while after Burridge's departure the beauty, not feeling inclined for any other compation, repaired to her dressing-room to gaze at her own reflection in her toilet glass—the only reflection, by-the-by, she very much delighted in—"Come here! By the merest chance I have been let into a very important secret. That artful Jessica! that treacherous Lucy, but we can counter-plot, and, I fancy, to some purpose."

"What is it, mamma?" asked Aurelia, as she twirled her black ringlets, "what is it?"

" I hope you won't be so supine about it,

when I tell you what it is. Jessica and Lucy are plotting together to get Delamere away for the former. What do you think of that?"

"That there is not much danger of their succeeding," said Aurelia, smiling in the glass.

"Ah! I am not at all sure of that. Consummate art is often more than a match for the most transcendant beauty; and the best matches have often been made by plain but cunning women."

"Well, Lord Stare thinks nothing of her; he had never noticed her till I pointed her out."

"But Lord Stare, my dear, is not half so good a match as Delamere; nor would his conquest be half so great a triumph: besides that, he is not a man of high honour; he may mean nothing; and, if he does not, his attentions will be very injurious to you."

"I am sure he looks in earnest; I never saw more meaning in any one's eyes."

"The more earnest a man looks, the less so he often feels; and the more meaning he puts into his eyes, the less he often evinces in his words. Has he said anything decisive?"

"No, not exactly: but I can see that he is in love with me. When I said, some people thought Jessica pretty, he asked, who thought of the stars when the sun was shining? and he said something too about an eternal chain wreathed with roses."

"Ah! but, my dear, tout cela n'engage à rien! Which do you prefer, Lord Stare or Delamere?"

"I scarcely know," pouted the beauty; "it is something, you know, mamma, to be a lord. That little sickly child may live; and then Delamere will never have a title. To be sure, Delamere is the most clever: but, then, he does not seem to admire what I say and do half so much as Lord Stare does. Delamere never compliments me, except on my beauty: but Lord Stare says I have a great deal of genius and wit. If Lord Stare is a gambler, and gay, and all that, Delamere is a poet and a painter, which I think much more disagreeable; for he

peculiar style of dress, and look.—I wish I knew two ti

"What are they, my love

"What Lord Stare has a the little Mandeville will die

"Well, I believe Lord S and that the little earl will no as it may, I should think you see Jessica wheedle away I do not accept him, I should the triumph of refusing him."

"Yes, so should I: but done?"

"Listen. I was in the known to Jessy and Lucy, h trees, and I heard Lucy sav.

- "Jessica wrote it! la! why it's in print, and looks just like any other article!"
- "Well! what of that? all the articles are written by some one, and then printed."
- "Oh! are they? Oh! yes, of course they must be: but how clever! La! why I dare say she could write a book."
  - " I dare say she could; and so could you."
  - " La! I shouldn't know what to put in it."
- "Well, keep that opinion to yourself. Every one sees you are beautiful—the great object is to make them think you clever. Now I am sure that artful Jessica, who entre nous has a great deal of talent, has done this to win Delamere's heart. All men are vain, and she knows he would be doubly pleased, both at the public praise of his poem, and the deep and hidden interest she had betrayed. However, it has been done anonymously; and at present, from what I overheard, Delamere is to have no idea of the author. In the meantime, by a clever counterplot, let us make him think you wrote it. He'll fancy you've as much genius

and heart as you have beauty; and, not, he'll propose."

"Oh! mamma, he will never this write that!"

"Why not you as well as Jessy? the glass—have you not a finer: brighter eye? Why, child, a p would decide you were much the gre of the two."

"But, mamma, it would be so un

" Is it fair in Jessica to be trying away your admirer?"

"No, indeed—a mean spiteful c declare she deserves it: but I'm a were married he would find it out."

"How so?"

"Why, if I could write so cleverl expect to hear me talk very cleverly were to say or do any thing silly, he see I was no genius."

"Never fear, my dear; the more you say and do, the more you'll be other geniuses I ever saw. Mos

child, put all their eleverness in their books, and show very little in their conduct or their conversation."

- " Well, but how could it be managed?"
- "Oh, very delicately; and, lest it ever should come out, you must appear quite innocest of the deception, which may pass for a mistake of mine. See, here is the review—you must copy out the article."
- "Copy out the article?" faltered Aurelia. who had by no means the pen of a ready writer. but to whom the writing even a letter was a dreadful bore, as she always found it necessary to make several copies, which generally gave her a bad head-ache, "Write it out. mamma? Oh, I should make so many blots and mistakes, and it would take me a month!"
- "You cannot make any mistake in spelling, (your weakest point,) child, for you have only to copy what is before you: and, as for blots, alterations, faults, and erasures, the more you make the more will it be like the manuscript of a person of genius."

shall see it. He, seeing the m handwriting, will of course fa be yours. Thus put on a wro make some allusion which, l bring a thousand blushes to vo Surprised at the depth of feel delicate concealment and real the conquest your beauty has manœuvre will complete. Yo mere in a snare of another's v propose; and if you are a ser accept him; for Lord Stare i pared to him in any respect, be a male jilt, even if he were " Oh, if I had not to write relia. "How shall I ever get clever of Jessica! La! and "Well, you will only have to copy them."

"Writing so much will make my eyes red."

"Well, then, only write a page or two, that will do, as it will pass for a part of the rough copy."

"Oh, how tiresome!" sighed the beautiful Aurelia: "I declare it's not worth while."

"Not worth while! when thousands are writing their eyes out for a precarious subsistence, and I only want you to write a few pages to secure a husband who may be an earl, with a princely fortune."

At this moment Flounce came in to announce that Captain Delamere was in the library.

"He's just come from Brighton, my lady, in his new pheaton; and, I must say, he appears quite salubrious from the sea-breezes; and he have brought with him the most perfect seraphim of a child, miss, quite a model of infancy, to say nothing of his being a hearl."

"Oh, mamma! do you go down to receive him; don't let him be alone with them: it does not attributed to your toilet; and y a certain rank should always be "La, miss," said Flounce, a her hair, "Captain Delamere d Hebe; and so very pelite, he alsays, How are you, Mrs. Flou natural curtsies and says—"

"Oh, never mind telling me Did he ask for me?"

"I can't say he did, miss," offended at being forbidden to a sayings, and giving a sharp and tug to the long black tress she "I can't say he did, miss: but a petikeler hurry to pay his de Jessica, who jist at that moment the square with Miss I non?"

herself the master spirit of the two, and often treated Aurelia de haut en bas, " having made my 'ead ache, by trimming up a new 'at for my lady, I was taking a mouthful of hair at the 'all door; and feeling a little henwee, I was listening to Tim's account of that strange denooment between 'im and Mr. Burridge. I must say, mem, I think Tim shewed a very hindependant spirit; and really, miss, Tim, if his 'air was curled and powdered, hasn't not by no means a unbecoming face, and is remarkable well grown. if he had any advantage of twoilette; and he vows, miss, he's twenty if he's a day: so that he an't such a mere boy, after hall. I do wish, miss, my lady would send off James, who don't at all attend to horders, and has demeaned 'imself to pay his devours to the 'ousmaid, and would take Tim, who 'as quite a horiginal genius and a very pretty taste."

"There! how do I look?" said Aurelia, who, entirely engrossed by her toilet, had not paid the slightest attention to Flounce's communications.

"Why, miss, I must say I've seen you look more becoming," said Flounce; avenging herself for the neglect she had met with: but the glass was again consulted, and believed in preference to Flounce; and in all the pride and flush of conscious beauty Aurelia hastened to meet Delamere.

## · CHAPTER III.

Un best visage at it plus best de tous its speciacles, so thought La Bruyere long age, and so I believe thinks every man and every woman too: but then the proverb says, "every eye has its own beauty;" and it is certain that some faces are the most beautiful objects in nature in the eyes of some, yet are scarce remarked by others—that is, however, when that most arbitrary of tyrants, the heart, swards the golden apple; but putting the heart out of the question, there is an abstract beauty which none can be insensible to, but which all must admire; and such was Aurelia Vernon's. This

degree of beauty never disappoints one; and after an absence seems even to surpass the picture traced upon our memory.

And such was Delamere's feeling: Aurelia's beauty, which he had almost forgotten-for it spoke rather to the senses than to the heart -almost astonished him. The little Egbert. too, for children are invariably worshippers of the beautiful, responded to her caresses, and left Lucy and Jessica to fix his large eyes on her, while Delamere, almost unconsciously. did the same. Aurelia's complexion grew more brilliant still, and Jessica's pale cheek waxed paler and paler. He was come! He to whose coming she had so looked forward! He had greeted her kindly; but what greeting would not have disappointed her, after the vague and lovely visions she had cherished? What had she hoped? What had she expected? Nothing! nothing definite; but in the realisation of aught long expected, there is generally a sense of disappointment. She had remembered him

as she had last seen him, with something of humility and diffidence in his look and manner; but then he was the candidate, and she the judge. And every poet feels afraid-even of the judge himself has created! Any one who submits a child of his brain to another's approbation or censure is for the time in that other's power: then, too, her praise, and perhaps his own poetry, had animated him; he seemed so enthusiastic, so feeling, so devoted, so grateful; she felt so much more intimate with him; and now, though he looked handsomer and more elegant than ever, he was cold, worldly, artificial, compared to the Osmond of her dream. She wondered she had dared to speak so freely of his poem to him, -to criticise it! It seemed impossible he should ever love her. And then, when she timidly raised her eyes, she saw his fixed on Aurelia; and little Egbert had said, "I'll buy the pretty lady, and give her to dear Osmond." And all were laughing, and some blushing, and Jessica forced a laugh too. -but hot tears were rising to her eyes, and

there was a choking sensation in her throat, and a fainting sensation throughout her frame; till at length, fearing to betray herself, she rose and quitted the room.

"Have you seen how your poem is praised in the — Review?" asked Lucy.

"No," replied Delamere, trying to appear unconcerned, but with the flush of surprise and joy rising to his temples: "I only came to town last night, and have not yet seen the ——— Review, nor heard of it."

"Come, Miss Lucy, I fancy you are joking—it is not likely, coming out only a fortnight ago, the Review should have noticed such a trifle, much less have praised it, if it had."

"I never joke with people about their own children," said Lucy, "and no parent is so tetchy about his real child as a poet about the offspring of his brain."

"Get the Review, to convince him, my dear," said Lady Vernon.

<sup>&</sup>quot; No, indeed !"

"I wonder where it is !" said Lucy, looking about for it.

"I saw it on the table in Aurelia's dressingroom," answered Lady Vernon. Delamere looked at Aurelia, whose face was immediately suffused with blushes!———

She has been reading it, thought Delamere; and, as her blushes betray, with some interest. Without the least pretension, she has a high literary taste. Sweet girl! How rare an union of talent, beauty, and the most winning modesty!

In the meantime, Lucy ran to fetch the Review. "There will be no enduring you," she said, "when you have read it."

"Well, then, I will not read it here; have you heard to whom it is attributed?"

"Oh, to every one by turns, and no one long! But I have my own secret opinion, which I shall not reveal."

" And you, Miss Vernon?"

"I! oh, I!—I am sure— what can make you ask me—I—" and consciousness of intended deception (in one not much used to manœuvre) produced a triumph the most accomplished art could never have achieved. Aurelia blushed, hesitated, and the water sparkled in her eyes; and her manner was so naturally agitated, that when she rose and walked into the conservatory, she left Delamere to a thousand vague conjectures dismissed as soon as formed; Lucy quite astounded; and Lady Vernon triumphant at her daughter's admirable acting—(for such it seemed to her).

"Oh, no, no, no—it cannot be! perhaps she knows something about it—perhaps she may be in the secret: but how could a young, timid girl conquer all the necessary difficulties, and effect what most men would fail in? I dare say it is by some eminent author, who has been struck with my poem: perhaps Sir Lytton, or Campbell or Wordsworth."

"Well, you have not even looked into the Review?" said Lucy, archly.

"I am not so very curious."

"No: you are more than curious, you are anxious; so anxious, that you do not dare to look!"

"Of course. I may be severely cut up; and then you would all laugh at my discomfiture. However, I must be going," he added, longing to be alone with the Review: "I will take it with me, to give me an excuse for bringing it back."

And Delamere started up, for man is vain, and more vain of his intellectual than his personal claims; even Aurelia was not so lovely at that moment in his eyes as the Review that contained the praise of his poem.

"I don't wish to go, Osmond," said Egbert, to whom Aurelia had just given some of her bon-bons.

"Ah!" said Lady Vernon, "we have not thanked you for all your elegant new year's gifts."

"Now, you do indeed drive me away," he replied, glad of another excuse to be off; "Come, Egbert."

"Leave Egbert with us, to-day; and come in the evening to fetch him."

"Very well. Where is Miss Thornton? How does she like her book? Tell her, I shall examine her in it this evening."

"Now, don't let the horses run away with you, while you are reading your Review," said Lucy.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE evening came. Aurelia, who was a little of a gourmande, had eaten so many of her French bon-bons that she had a head-ache, looked pale, and was rather out of temper. Jessica, ashamed of the triumph she had allowed her feelings to obtain over her reason during Osmond's morning visit, had resolved to be weak no more; and, after a few tears, a few struggles, and a few sighs, to what now seemed such wild delusion, pride, which can borrow the sober garb of reason whenever it is convenient, persuaded her, that to think of Osmond as she had thought of him was weak; to betray any interest in him, unpardonable.

"I will conquer this folly, I will conquer myself!" she said; and so saying, she resolved to go down stairs and devote herself to the amusement of Egbert, who, already forsaken by the fickle Aurelia, was looking at some very green and very monotonous Views of the Rhine, with a ludicrous expression of impatience and ennui.

Oh! to amuse a child with one's heart ill at ease, heavy with the ruins of fallen hopes,—the task is indeed a severe one; and if Jessica achieves it, she has made an important step towards self-conquest! And she did achieve it. We will not ask what lurking interest in Delamere made her so unwearied in her efforts to please his little cousin: for what human motive is unmixed? but this we can say, that of that interest at that moment she was not aware.

The evening saw a total change in little Egbert's predilections: for children, unlike men, are seldom long deceived in character; perhaps, because less pains are taken to deceive them. Aurelia had little imagination. Of her might have been said, as of Peter Bell—

> " A primrose on the river's brim A yellow primrose was to him, And it was nothing more!"

To her, Egbert was a child, nothing but a child; she had eaten too many bon-bons to be inclined to dance or romp with him; and in trying to tell him a story she fell asleep. For an author to send his readers to sleep, is, alas! too common; but to fall asleep himself! Egbert tried to wake her; for he was interested about "the three men going down a dark lane," with which she had begun her story; but in the obscurity of that lane they were condemned to remain: for Aurelia, even when awakened, had no invention to get them out of it. All authors find it more easy to involve than to extricate: but all cannot end their troubles by a nap, unless, indeed, by that long nap from which they wake no more!

Little Egbert soon gave up the sleeping Aurelia, and the "three men," when Jessy

came, full of self-excited spirits, and danced and played with him: and, when he was tired, told him some stories, so amusing, that he begged to hear them, exactly the same, all over again; which, though very flattering, was rather embarrassing too, since they were all impromptus, while the auditor had a much more tenacious memory than the narrator, and was very angry at any unintentional change, inasmuch as it destroyed his entire belief in the fiction. Lucy, too, amused by Jessica's playful and ready inventions, joined the group; and when Delamere, arriving long before he was expected-indeed, just after dinner was concluded -was suddenly ushered into the drawing-room. he found Egbert, who had unwound Jessica's beautiful golden hair, having climbed up behind her on the sofa, resting his head, which he had playfully covered with her long curls, on her shoulder, while Lucy, seated on an ottoman at her feet, looked eyes full of lively interest in the moral web Jessica was weaving; and from another sofa, came a somewhat loud and regular noise, which, as the sleeper was a beauty, we dare not call a snore.

Captain Delamere was announced. He walked in; Aurelia did not wake, and our trio, grouped at the further end of the room, were too intent, the one in relating, the others in listening, to notice the announcement. So Delamere approached the nearest window, and stood, for a few minutes, shrouded by its drapery, and contemplating the party.

Was that the pale, sad Jessica of the morning? As Delamere gazed at her, he thought he had never seen anything so lovely: for he had never seen so much of intellect in the face of beauty. The excitement of her fancy had slightly flushed her very delicate cheek and lighted her blue eyes; her unbound hair fell in a shower of gold around her, and the story she was telling had so much of quiet humour and gentle pathos, and was related too in so sweet a voice, and with so natural a grace, that Delamere almost envied his little cousin, as he hung about her; nay, he would have deemed himself

blest in Lucy's place, at Jessica's feet. While, to complete her triumph, the breathing we have alluded to having caught his attention, he beheld Aurelia in no very elegant attitude, for she did not expect to be seen, and, what was worse, he heard her too.

But Jessica's story was told; and though Egbert implored her to tell it all over again, exactly the same, Jessica remembered that Delamere was expected, and that she must arrange her hair; so, promising to return soon, she was trying to escape from Egbert, when, in running playfully away from him, he suddenly pushed her against the window, and, shaded by the curtains, she saw, nay found herself almost in the arms of Delamere!

An universal exclamation ensued. Aurelia awoke. "Oh, la! oh my goodness!" she exclaimed, "Lucy! Jessica! how unkind of you not to tell me Captain Delamere was come!"

"We did not know it," said Lucy: but the beauty had already seized a candle and hastened away. Jessica, on the contrary, though taken completely by surprise, welcomed Delamere with innate courtesy: and then telling him that he must excuse her, while she repaired the ravages Egbert had been making in her toilet, she too left the room.

In five minutes Jessica had twisted up her hair, arranged her simple dress, and quietly taken her place at the tea-table. Delamere was pleased with her indifference to a contre temps which many women would have teased and apologised about the whole evening. He was beginning to take that scrutinising and ever watchful interest in all she said and did, which announces that love, the sentinel of the heart, is awake and on the watch. Aurelia, having made an elaborate toilet, reappeared at length, looking very beautiful. She entered into long apologies and explanations, and smiled, and glanced, and sighed in vain. Two seats were vacant-the one by her side, the other by Jessica's; and deliberately Delamere took the latter.

The colour rose to Jessica's cheek, and her

hand trembled, as she gave Delamere a cup of coffee. That Osmond, when he might have sat by the radiant Aurelia, should have chosen a seat by her! Ah! in sudden joy, how easily we forget the code we have formed in sorrow! Trembling and blushing Jessica, never yet had Indifference a votary like thee.

When Lady Vernon entered the room, she was by no means pleased to see Delamere by Jessy's side, and Egbert standing near her with his little arm round her waist.

There is no time to be lost, she said to herself, as she looked at Jessica with that cold and sarcastic disapproval, which, in spite of herself, generally checked the lively spirits of the poor protégée. "Jessica seems to have robbed you of your little admirer, my love," said Lady Vernon, spitefully.

"Oh! dear, no," said Aurelia, bridling and holding out her hand to the child: "you love me best, don't you?"

"No: you went to sleep; and you couldn't tell me about the three men in the dark lane; and I don't think it would have been a pretty story, even if you could. I love Jessy best: she danced and played with me, and told me several pretty stories, and finished them all."

And so saying, he put his head on Jessy's shoulder, and said, "When I'm old and have money, I shall buy Jessy to give her to be Osmond's wife. I shan't buy you, you don't know any stories, and you fall asleep."

All laughed; but some of those laughs were bitter ones.

"My lady," said the courtly butler, with the mysterious air as common to butlers as their silk stockings, "Mr. Burridge's servant is below with a parcel for Miss Thornton. He says he has his master's orders to put it into Miss Thornton's own hands. Is it your ladyship's pleasure that he should be admitted?"

"Oh! certainly, Johnstone. I suppose, Jessica," said Lady Vernon, with a cold sneer, "you do not wish to see this ambassador alone? If you do, pray say so."

Delamere looked astonished. Jessica blush-

"So size talks you," whispers but the whisper mached Delam Jessira, fearing the mission in thing to do with her late reques embarrassed. Delamere eyed he curiosity.

The well-trained Johnstone is his lip to curve as he ushered in T pletely metamorphosed—Tim in which, from having frequently is cognised as having once belonge himself—Tim, who thus equipped it thought himself equal to Johnston butler in London—Tim, who, infla could yet not fill out his new a shoes, coat, trowsers, and waiste

to his eyes, and meeting over his nose; a stock which gave him a neck like a crane; an immense pair of black gloves, and giant boots; a count whose waist was below his hips, and a pair of bagging grey trowsers—the identical trowsers of which he had been so cruelly deprived.

Without taking off his huge black glove, which indeed he had been obliged to fusten on, he, having first handed to Jessica a large brown paper parcel, put his hand proudly in the pocket of his grey trowsers, and produced a note.

" My master," said Tim, with great dignity, " hordered me, miss, to wait for a hanswer."

While Jessy was opening her letter and her parcel, Lucy interfered: "What, Tim, have you made it up, then, with Mr. Burridge?"

"Yes, miss," said Tim, " measter comed to his sinces when other suvvants comed to hoffer, and not one among the kit as could rub him down; and one, miss, had the himperance to tell him, if he wanted so much rubbing down, he'd better get a groom, and not a wally."

"What, then, he asked you to stay?"

"That warn't enough, miss. He said, miss, my wages should be ris, and I should have his last soot but two—a hexcellent soot," and Tim looked proudly down upon it, "and that he'd buy back them grey trowsers he'd changed away, miss; and these is them; and he'd put me in plain clothes, which makes me a butler at once, Miss, as was always the hobject of my ambition, and what I'm sooted for."

"Well, Tim, you may go down stairs, and wait till Miss Thornton's note is ready," said Lady Vernon, who prudently feared to ask Jessy any questions, or quiz Mr. Burridge before his butler.

Tim, all butler as he was, pulled his forelock and left the room in a manner which might have been more dignified had he not had to scuffle a little to keep on his gigantic boots.

"And now, Jessica," said, in honied tone,

Lady Vernon, "is it indiscreet, my love, to ask you what Mr. Burridge sends and says to you?"

"Oh! no; it is a new year's gift—that is all."

"But you are the only person so distinguished, my love: he has not extended his kindness to any other member of the family."

"Perhaps," said Jessica, thus goaded to a retort, "he thought me the only member of the family in need of kindness."

"How very severe and romantic you are, Miss Jessica. May I be permitted?" and she extended her hand for the note.

"Here, let me read it aloud," said the kindhearted Lucy; resolved, if there were anything in it that could wound or embarrass Jessy, to pass it over.

Jessy assented, and she read-

## " DEAR JESS,

"I was astonishly cut up, to see others receiving fine new year's presents, and you, the one most in need, scarcely noticed. However. I told you it should be none the worse for you. Jessy, and I'm as good as my word. I've been all day in the city, looking about for a good, warm, handsome, elegant, and serviceable shawl for you, and I think, at last, Jess, I've got my pennyworth for my penny,-and a pretty penny it cost, I can tell you; only I hope it will last you your life; and, as the man at Ellis's said, a good article is not dear in the end; he coaxed me, too, into going beyond my original intention, and buying you a thick silk of the same colour for a dress. I think both the shawl and the gown are just the shade of bright yellow you prefer; at least, so I presume, by your always wearing it. I wish you health and long life to wear them out; and many a long walk do I hope to take with you in that shawl, cutting out the best of them.

"I meant to bring it you myself: but I got my feet so wet in the city, and with bothering and choosing among a thousand shawls and silks, I'm so tired and giddy, that, after soaking bran and water, I shall wrap my head up in flannel, take a basin of hot gruel, two of Morrison's pills, and get to bed. Ah! it is at such times as these, dear Jessy, that we single middle-aged men feel the want of a kind nurse, in the shape of a fond wife;—as Johnson says, Jess, 'marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures.' I think we can both say that with truth: I am almost a convert to the creed. If I am better, I shall call to-morrow. Meantime, let me hear that I have not lost my day, laid in a cold, and laid out my money to no purpose; but that you like your new year's presents—God bless you, Jess.

" Ever your attached,

JACOB BURRIDGE.

"P.S. I have taken Tim into favour again; I hope you do not object to him. He is worth a hundred of the pert puppies who came to offer to me: he is really a very valuable, faithful creature; and, in a change of condition, would

be a great treasure; for I hear he nursed all his little brothers and sisters, and understands babies better than most nurses."

Lucy had begun to read the letter aloud: but it was so evident to Lady Vernon that she was skipping the best parts of it, that she took it out of her hand, and read part of it; then, folding it up, said, "This is meant only for your private eye, dear Jessica; I beg a thousand pardons for my indiscretion."

"Oh! pray read it; do read it, Lucy," said poor Jessica, pale, agitated, and tearful: for she saw a look of doubt and scorn in Delamere's eyes. "It is some joke—a very bad one; but Mr. Burridge is an awkward joker: pray read it, Lucy—I am sure it is some stupid joke of Mr. Burridge."

"It is no joke to him, poor fellow!" said Lady Vernon, shaking her head.

Lucy, to oblige Jessica, who thought Delamere would fancy something worse than the truth, read it aloud; and even poor Jessica could not help joining in the "laughing chorus" which, at its close, could not be suppressed.

"I cannot accept these things," she said.

"You cannot refuse them, my dear," said Lady Vernon; "you would hurt Mr. Burridge's feelings, and seriously offend Sir William: how could you be so heartless as to return them, Jessica, when that poor man has actually made himself ill in getting them for you? Oh, no! you have not entertained such scruples about other presents—why about this? Let us see them."

Lady Vernon took out an immense flaring, but very expensive yellow shawl, with a red and green border, and a thick flowered damask silk, much like those our grandmothers wore; both of which being a bright yellow by candlelight, were of course of the most flaring hue by day.

"What can I do?" said Jessica, unconsciously clasping her hands, and raising her tearful eyes to Delamere's face.

Its expression changed as he marked her

unaffected distress. "You must write and thank him, my dear Miss Thornton," he said, almost affectionately, "and then let him see you once or twice in your saffron garb,—I am sure he means some allusion to Hymen by his offering,—and then lose them—have them stolen—give them to Flounce—anything to get rid of them!"

"That would be a great pity — I think the shawl very becoming," said Lady Vernon, throwing it over Jessica, who, her figure hidden by its ample folds, and with her bright gold hair, looked one mass of yellow.

"Becoming! — why I shall look like a wandering dog-day, and therefore be very welcome in the depth of winter. How I hate it!" said Jessica, throwing it off her; wo-man's vanity adding to her maidenly dislike to the receiving so expensive a gift. It would have been some solace had she looked well in it; but to incur at once a weight of obligation and ugliness!—who could feel grateful for being made a fright?

Lady Vernon picked it up—threw it gracefully over Aurelia's shoulders.

It was really very handsome in its style, and with her tall form, black hair, and matchless complexion, looked very elegant.

"Apollo will mistake you for a priestess of the sun, and fall in love with you," said Os mond, struck by her beauty in the repudiated shawl.

"She is already a favourite with Apollo," whispered softly, and with a meaning glance, Lady Vernon.

" Indeed!"

"Oh, do not tax her with it; she is timid even to shyness; but some day I will show you some of her effusions."

Delamere looked at her with a new interest.

"Well, Jessica, you must write and thank Mr. Burridge, my dear,—at any rate his wish has been to please you."

"Oh! can I not return them, aunt?"

" I will never sanction your repaying kind-

ness with insult, Miss Thornton," said Lady Vernon, coldly.

"Dearest Jessica, you must accept them," said Lucy; "you will find my desk in the next room; go and express all the thanks you ought to feel: come, you will be no greater hypocrite than we have all been over and over again."

Jessica rose to obey.

"Now, my loves," said Lady Vernon, "play Captain Delamere that sweet duet from Lucretia. You must not look over them," said the prudent mamma, who not only feared Delamere might discover that Aurelia was no great performer, but wished to have a little private conference with him herself.

"I am very sorry poor Jessica's shawl and dress are not to her taste; some women are so very touchy on that point."

"I think Miss Thornton is more annoyed at being obliged to accept a present from Mr. Burridge than even at the nature of the present itself."

" I am sure I hope she is; anything like

ingratitude is so revolting in a female; but she is a very strange girl: it is a great trial, and a great responsibility, to have the bringing up of any but one's own daughters: mine are frank, open, careless young girls. I know every thought and feeling of their minds; but an older person—one who was all her life at school—a girl's school!" And her moral ladyship shook her significant head.

"Why surely you would not have had her brought up at a boy's school?" said Osmond. Lady Vernon did not appear to hear the interruption.

"A school is a little world, Captain Delamere, and a regular school-girl is as knowing as any woman of the world: of course, a school has its advantages; I do not deny it: management, manner, tact, penetration, calculation, all these are acquired at school, together with that degree of self-possession, without which no woman gets on in the world: but then frankness and simplicity are sacrificed, and I value these qualities so much in the young, that

though I see my girls are little fit to cope with the world in comparison with Jessica, I yet rejoice that they were never at school."

"For my part," replied Delamere, "I believe that schools are very much calumniated; I think in schools, as in all other communities, each finds his own level. I think habits of order and self-control are early acquired, and that real frankness and simplicity will stand any test; while, to my mind, that virtue which has never been tried against evil counsel, or evil companionship, is at best but dubious."

"Thank you, my dears; now play that sweet duet from Norma.—Then you prefer a school education for girls, Captain Delamere?"

"I have not thought on the subject sufficiently to decide positively; but thus far I can say—I have no prejudice against a girl because, bereaved early of her parents, she has been educated in a school; and I own, when I compare Miss Thornton with the generality of girls of her own age—when I see her so gifted, yet so modest—so beautiful and yet so unaffected,

and so well read, without one spark of pedantry, I fancy, if I ever had a daughter, I should like her to go to Miss Thornton's school."

For a little while Lady Vernon could only laugh—a little short laugh, accompanied by a very gentle toss of her head and shrug of her shoulder. At length she said, "I am not at all blind to Jessica's merits, I consider her a very shrewd, clever, strong-minded young woman; but when you speak of her in conjunction with those whom you call girls of her own age, you forget that she has an incalculable advantage in acquired tact, knowledge of the world, and penetration, given her by her age—over my poor girls, for instance."

"Miss Thornton is very young, I believe?"

"Yes, she is young, but not as compared with my girls, who are still almost children. A young woman of three or four or five and twenty, has an incalculable advantage over rash romantic creatures of fifteen or sixteen."

"I thought Miss Thornton was only two and twenty, and that Miss Vernon was only two years her junior."

"Three or four or five and twenty; I do not know her exact age, but somewhere thereabouts; but there is much more than the difference you imagine between her and Aurelia. I do know the ages of my own girls."

There was one month less between them than Osmond had stated.

"Well, at any rate, Miss Thornton looks an incarnation of youth and candour."

"Oh, yes! a woman is never so brilliant as at five or six and twenty."

Come, thought Delamere, in time Jessica will be made out five or six and forty! "How very young she looks," he said, as Jessica entered, and going up to Lucy showed her the letter to Burridge which she had just finished.

"I think," said Lady Vernon, "that women of six or seven and twenty look younger than girls in their teens: they have so much more art—they know so well what looks youthfulI wonder what she has written; I hope she does not mean to jilt that excellent man."

"To jilt him?" said Delamere, pale with surprise and horror; "good Heavens, madam, you cannot mean that that old bear has any pretensions in that quarter, or that Jessica— Miss Thornton, I mean—encourages him?"

"Oh, I am not in her confidence, I only judge by what I see; I have been told nothing -long sittings together tête-à-tête-correspondences, presents, all these things look odd-but they may mean nothing; perhaps if a younger and wealthier suitor came forward, poor Burridge would be told they meant nothing: I only wish it were settled one way or another before Marcus comes home, for he is very susceptible, and I sent him away, in a great measure, on her account. You know poor Sir William is next heir to Lord Rocksavage, and my poor dear husband is not a long-lived man, I fear; and next in the succession comes Marcus; and I own I think, as Lord Rocksavage, he ought to look higher than to his father's protégée."

"I think no man can look higher than to a gifted, virtuous, and beautiful girl. But that old Polar bear, with the snows of sixty winters on his head—he to raise his green, purblind, spectacled eyes to that model for a Psyche—that young inexplicably charming girl! oh! it is too absurd!"

"I do not think so: Mr. Burridge looks old for his age, Jessica young for hers; but Mr. Burridge cannot be more than forty-nine, and really I think that a woman between twenty and thirty, without fortune, and of very doubtful pretensions to beauty, makes no contemptible match in marrying a fine, well-grown, and very respectable man of forty-nine, with a good income. I believe that is Jessiea's opinion also:

—at about thirty women begin to calculate."

"But thirty has nothing to do with Jessica: dear Lady Vernon, you have most kindly taken ten years from Mr. Burridge's age, and added them to hers—a great favour to him, but none to Miss Thornton. Excuse my frankness—I think such a match would be as preposterous

as one with the genuine spectacled bear of the Zoological Gardens—nay, even worse; for with the first embrace of the latter her woes would end, but in an union with Burridge—pshaw! it is too revolting an idea. Well, remember you have promised to dine with me on Saturday, to meet the malade imaginaire Lady Mandeville, and to see Miss Tadpole in her new character, as Dempster's fiancée. I shall ask the poor Eldertons, because I hope to get Lady Mandeville to take one of them in the Tadpole's place; they are getting so old and grey, something should be done for them."

"You are so kind; so considerate: but Miss Tadpole—is she really engaged to Dempster?" said Lady Vernon, in a tone of vexation; for she had often thought that Dempster would have done very well for Lucy.

"Oh! yes, really engaged, as you will feel sure when you see them together. Now come in high good-humour, Lady Vernon, and be not severe on the deficiences of a bachelor's métage."

I hope it will not long be a bachelor's ménage, thought Lady Vernon, as she gave him her white and jewelled fingers, and thought over her plan about the Review.

Osmond now drew near the pianoforte to rouse Egbert from a sweet sleep he had sunk into on Jessica's bosom, and to remind them all of their promise to dine with him on Saturday, and bring songs and pieces of music; to give one parting gaze of admiration at Aurelia's beauty; and to feel a sort of incipient jealous resentment against Jessica, which Lady Vernon's remarks had called forth, yield, as he marked the trace of tears upon her cheeks, and the flutter of the little hand she extended to him.

I will invite Burridge to meet them on Saturday, he said to himself, and then I shall be able to judge what truth there is in that old harpy's report: but it cannot be—Jessica, Mrs. Burridge! oh! it is too frightful; and he lashed his poor innocent horse: but in this world the innocent often suffer undeservedly.

Jessica's yellow shawl and yellow dress became the torment of her life. Burridge never saw her without alluding to them. He proposed all kinds of walks and visits to cheap or gratis exhibitions, that he might have the pleasure of seeing Jessica eclipse the gaudiest in her flaring drapery. Every stare and comment bestowed upon it seemed to him a tribute; and in remarking them, he chuckled, pressed her arm, and said, "Ah! Jess, fine feathers make fine birds; you never attracted so much admiration in your old black velvet cloak."

Jessy sighed. Oh! how she wished herself wrapped in that old cloak, in "hodden grey," or even in the odious "snuff-colour," rather than to feel herself so unbecomingly conspicuous as Burridge's gifts had made her: but yet, for two reasons, both traceable to the kindness of her heart, and the rare self-devotion of her character, she refrained from asserting her prerogative of choice and casting them aside for ever. In the first place, the poor old gentleman seemed to take so real a pride in his gaudy but expensive

gift, that she could not bear to undeceive and mortify him. In the next, Sir William, to whom she had spoken on the subject, had pointed out to her that such a step would seriously offend Burridge, and probably annul all hopes from his cousin's interest; so Jessica submitted, for some time, to the daily martyrdom of shewing herself everywhere in her flaring yellow, till she had acquired the sobriquet of the "sun flower;" of passing for really plain, when she was really pretty; and of getting the reputation of a gaudy and vulgar taste, when she possessed, in reality, one of the chastest and most refined description. This was another of those quiet sacrifices and long martyrdoms of which the world takes no heed: yet,-answer me, each pretty reader of this tale, -was it not a martyrdom indeed? and, when you remember that often in this garb Jessy was doomed to meet Osmond Delamere - that Osmond Delamere whose taste was so perfect - I think you will own that many who have braved the stake were scarcely more genuine martyrs. Sometimes, it must be owned, Jessica had recourse to head-aches to avoid going out: sometimes the weather was too warm, sometimes too cold for her gay shawl: but an anxious glance from Sir William, or a disappointed growl from Burridge, sufficed to overrule her! "You needn't be afraid to wear your shawl, Jessy, a good article lasts for ever; that shawl will never wear out."

## CHAPTER V.

The day of Delamere's dinner-party was an important day to many. It is very seldom that among the cold unexciteable class to which the Vernons belonged, a party of any kind, (much less a common dinner-party,) produces so vivid an interest. To account in some degree for this assertion, we will, as a very great favour, take our reader with us to some of the different manufactories of beauty and elegance, called, in common parlance, dressing-rooms; where we shall find that all is bustle and preparation for Delamere's dinner.

First, let us peep into Mr. Burridge's: he having but one fire-place, namely, in his sitting-room, has had the good sense to have his scanty toilet-apparatus removed thither. He has just been admirably rubbed down by Tim, and is sitting by the fire pro tempore bald, while his valet-butler, scarlet with exertion, and radiant with success, is pinching, with the fire-tongs, a number of papillotes which he has put into Mr. Burridge's wig.

A large organ of benevolence is revealed by the temporary absence of the said wig. Poor Burridge was suffering from that painful, feverish suspense, we have all known at one time or another, when a tailor or a *modiste* has taught us the common lot of mortals—disappointment!

"Tim, do you know," he said, after a long growl, "I begin to be very uneasy about my waistcoat."

"Oh! never fear, measter; Mr. Macbotcher's always as good as his word. Don't go for to arrow yourself up, and make yourself look all rough like, when I've made you look so beautiful smooth."

"If I had any other waistcoat that would do,
-my green velvet, Tim?"

"La! measter! what that 'ere old green, with them stains, as you promised me? I wouldn't have you demean yourself to go in that 'ere."

Tim had his own reasons. The moment Burridge was fairly off, he meant to sport that very "old green" himself, in a visit to Mrs. Flounce.

"That's six! it has actually struck!" said Burridge, ready to cry.

"Well; now, don't take on so, measter; ye duant dine till seven—you aint not axed till seven; and the butler over the way says as how, with great folks, that means eight."

"Tim, run! there was a single knock, perhaps it is Macbotcher after all."

Tim, wild with the same hope, darted along with such speed that he upset a foot-bath, and emptied a bason of scalding gruel, with which Burridge had meant to strengthen himself for the labours of the toilet, and which Tim had put on the mantel-piece to cool, on Burridge's bald head.

"Never mind it, measter," he said, as Burridge growled and swore with sudden pain, "it won't show under the wig."

"No, you awkward lout! but I shall feel it." Then, as the pain abated, he said, more gently, "There, Tim, they've knocked again, go and see if it's Macbotcher."

Tim departed: but this time, as one does all things the second time, with less hope and more caution.

- "Well, Tim, is it my waistcoat?"
- " No, measter: it's a man as wanted to know if Mrs. Stubbs lived here."
- "Deuce take him! Tim, how my head smarts."
  - "Wait a minute, measter, I knows a cure."
- "Well, be quick then: for I'm in very great

Tim hurried down stairs, and returned with a large lump of fresh butter.

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Burridge, expecting that it was to anoint his head, exclaimed, "Be quick, Tim!"

But Tim was by no means in a hurry: he knelt down, and began deliberately to grease the saucepan in which Burridge's gruel had been boiled.

"Why, confound you, Tim, what are you doing? Here, my head is ready."

Tim shook his head, looked very knowing, and went on greasing the saucepan. "Do you feel any easier, measter?"

"Now, don't provoke me, Tim. How should I feel easier for your greasing the saucepan?"

"How!" said Tim, with the glance of a Mesmerist, "why, that 'ere's the charm. The gruel as scalded you, measter, was boiled in this 'ere saucepan, therefore the saucepan's the cause: and when father cut his leg with a scythe, a very remarkable, clever, cunning man, telled him, every morning of his life, to go down on his two knees to the scythe, and grease it all over; and father done it regular, and in a month his leg was as well as ever."

"And so it would have been without his doing so, you fool!" said Burridge, in his anger and disappointment giving the saucepan a kick to the other end of the room, and tossing the butter and its accompanying paper envelope into the fire.

"Lord! measter," said Tim, "the paper's gone flaring up the chimbley! I only hope you haven't set it on fire. You wouldn't folly my advice, and have it swept; and there's a world of soot!"

"Tim, do you want to see me ruined?"

"Lord! no, measter: but you're more like to be ruined by a fire than by a sweep."

"There! there's a knock; I dare say that's Macbotcher; run! Tim, run!

Tim returned, looking very blank.

" Well, Tim?"

T'ant Macbotcher, measter; it's that 'ere cabman as you had the row with yesterday, com'd to know, once for all, whether you means to pay him that 'ere sixpence or not. If you don't, he says he means to summons you." "Hold your tongue, Tim. He's tioner and an impostor. Go and shu in his face."

Tim did as he was desired.

- " Is he gone ?"
- "Yes, sur; but he swears he'll be afore long; and he called you a hole beggarly——"
- "Stop, Tim: if you hear anythin mentary of me, it is your place to repe keep all offensive remarks to yourself
  - " How's your head, measter?"
  - " A good deal easier, Tim."
- "I know'd it would be; when I g the room, I began at the saucepan ag "Tim, you're a fool!"

your greasing that saucepan could in any way ease my head? you cannot be such a dolt."

"I think them's the dolts as won't believe anything they can't quite understand, though they see it with their own eyes! I seed father cured, and mother, and several more; and now I've seed you cured: and I believe, if my head was cut off to-morrow, if you'd just grease the hatchet as done it, it would grow on again!"

Burridge saw expostulation was vain against so enviable a degree of faith.

"Why, that's half-past six! I cannot go, Tim; I may as well get to bed," said Burridge, in his hopeless despair, "and give up the idea altogether."

"Now don't, measter: if you sets off in an hour, you'll be in excellent time. I've just spoke to the butler over the way, and he advises you, by all means, to keep your mind quiet; for he knows as Captain Delamere never dines till nigh eight. Here, let me put your wig on: I'll take out the papers when it is on

your head; because then I can settle the hair better to your face."

Burridge looked inexpressibly ludicrous in his wig, full of papillotes. "Tim, what's all that noise? what are all those knocks?"

Tim ran to the window: "Why, lord, measter, there's a crowd round the house, and all pointing up here, and the police, and the fire-engines, and the beadle!"

"What can it mean, Tim?"

A moment explained that some one had sworn Burridge's chimney was on fire; a cabman was ready to take oath he had seen several sparks issuing from it: Burridge's room was filled with firemen, parochial authorities, and sweeps — all was accusation, recrimination, hubbub and abuse!

Burridge, forgetting his papillotes and flannel gown, harangued the intruders. The portly beadle told him he was a "poor hinnocent old gentleman, who was evidently non compos;" and then he ordered an engine to play on the fire and extinguish it. Tim, foreseeing that the soot and smoke would spoil his clean, well-rubbed master, and his toilet, valiantly gathered up the latter, and pushed the former into the adjoining bedroom.

Here poor Burridge, still en papillote, sat down on his bed, quite overcome, and fairly wept.

"Now don't ye take on so," said poor Tim, almost weeping in sympathy. "They'll just sweep the chimbley as did want it."

"Oh, Tim! I shall be robbed, plundered, cheated, and—too late for dinner!"

"No, no,—there—there's a knock! I know it's Macbotcher's knock—measter, ye'll still be in excellent time."

And Macbotcher it was.

"Oh, Mr. Macbotcher, what alarm you've caused me!"

"I'm as gude as my waurd, mon, and never yet war ain o'the clan of Macbotcher waur than his waurd! But the deil! what's a' this? —why's a' tapsalterie, mon?" "Oh! because I'm cheated, plundered, before my very face!" replied Burridge.

"Measter wouldn't have the chimbley swept, and so it's been on fire!"

"Ah! a wilfu' mon maun hae his way," said Macbotcher, who was something of a Job's comforter.

"Well, let me try on my waistcoat," sighed Burridge. "I say, Macbotcher," he added, sinking his voice, into a confidential tone, "do you think in case I wished to change my condition, this would do for a wedding waistcoat?"

"I cannot say that," answered Macbotcher, who thought, on so extraordinary an occasion, he ought to make some extra profit; "nae, I think your waistcoat ought to be a virgin white, mon,—it's mair the thing for a bonny bridegroom and a braw wooer!"

"Well, Ellis's man told me it was just the thing."

"Thin he was jist an unco fule!"

"This does not meet; I cannot button it!"

"Haud yer breathe—here, lend' a han', Tim. Why, mon, it's the best fit in Lunnun town! There, ye look a brau young callant! a' but just your face!"

" But I feel very tight!"

"Tut, tut, mon! and you a braw wooer?—
pride maun be pinched!——"

"I never see you look half so illigant, measter," said Tim, who had had a brilliant success with the wig. But at this moment Burridge heard a noise in the next room: "I will see what they are doing," said he.

"Ye'll be covered with soot, measter! Now don't be so wasteful with the wig and the waistcoat!"

Burridge took off both, and then opened the drawing-rooom door; in an instant he was covered—blinded with the soot; he hastened back!

"A weell, a weell!" said Macbotcher, " a wilfu' mon maun hae his way!"

Then there was Burridge to be newly washed, and squeezed again into his tight waistcoat. Macbotcher kindly remained to assist; and, in spite of all his misfortunes, Burridge was at length put into high good-humour by Macbotcher's assertion that he looked like a "braw wooer," and Tim's declaration that he had never seen him so "beautiful illigant."

At length the toilet was complete: unwilling, with so youthful a figure, to appear in spectacles, Burridge, though he could not see well without them, put them aside. His cheeks were flushed: a pair of shoes which he had not worn for some years were routed out from some dark hiding-place, and with some difficulty, and, alas! not without some pain, forced on.

Burridge then called for a bundle of damaged white gloves, which he had bought in the city, at eight-pence halfpenny a pair!

Who would believe that of these wonderful gloves six pair split in the vain effort to get them on? so that they proved, in the end, dearer than gloves at the orthodox price. At last a pair with only a few cracks in them was found—a cab was called. Burridge, tightened in his waist and feet, and purblind from the want of

his spectacles, but elated and vain as a young beauty or an old blockhead, hobbled down between Tim and Macbotcher, and having been safely (with only a few stumbles) placed in the cab, was driven away, after having earnestly exhorted Tim to take care of his property—for sweeps, firemen and beadles were all thieves!

As he turned the corner of the street, he caught a glimpse of the cabman, who set up a shout as he passed; and then it struck him, for the first time, that it was from revenge that the cabman had informed that his chimney was on fire.

A shrewd guess that! Alas, that revenge should be as sweet to cabmen as to cabinet-ministers! When Burridge flung the paper of butter into the fire, a few sparks were seen to issue up the chimney—they caught the eye of Burridge's foe—here was revenge indeed! The result is known to the reader.

Burridge was fined five pounds, in addition to which the adroit little sweep, who was sent up the chimney, slipped into his soot-bag Burridge's large silver watch and an albata spoon, out of the basin of gruel, which he thought was a silver one, and which the landlady charged for as such!

The result of the summons was that the cabman was right in his demand; so Burridge was fined, and had to pay all costs. Thus, on the whole, in the endeavour to save a sixpence, poor dear Burridge was more than ten pounds out of pocket! But as Macbotcher declared, while he and Tim divided the eightpenny gloves, Tim thinking Flounce could mend them for him, and Macbotcher that the lassies could fit them for themselves,—"a wilfu' mon maun hae his way!"

## CHAPTER VI.

HASTEN we now to a different scene. Behold the poor Eldertons engaged in the hard struggle between pride and poverty. All day long had they been starching, ironing, dyeing, and renovating. Elder herself, who, as being the purse-bearer, assumes a great deal, and, occasionally, gives herself a few of those airs she has to endure from others, is seated before the only glass, while her sisters have recourse to certain angular fragments of a broken mirror.

"When will you have done with the glass?"
asked Bab, who had the smallest piece, and
one from which much of the quicksilver was
rubbed off.

terred Bab.

"What do you say?" asked Elder, not to hear her.

"I can't even see myself plain in t glass."

"Well, every one else can see yenough," retorted Elder, promptly ave affront offered to her hair.

Bab was silenced.

"Oh! I am so very tired, dear P

"Oh! I am so very tired, dear P Lavinia, putting down a large iron, " have a cup of tea: it is now not six shall not dine till eight. We shall d more spirit, and look much better aft

Pris, alias Elder, thought so too. saying "It is very extravagant, and I can't but you must not put in too much went to glean, not in "Palemon's fields," but in Elder's closet.

The tea, which, spite of the exhortation, she made very strong, together with the brief repose, had a magic effect on all the Elderton's. Goodhumour was restored, the finishing strokes were rapidly put to the white muslin dresses, and each assisted the other to twine a wreath in her hair. Grizzled locks were adroitly concealed or dyed, the ready needle soon caught up the hole, the slit, or the Jacob's ladder. Elder. albeit in general averse to rouge, remarked, that as in all probability Delamere's interest would avail to get one of them a chance of being chosen companion to the countess, a healthy appearance was very important—therefore, she thought a little art would be excusable. All gladly took the hint; and really when we consider that the youngest Elderton was turned forty-five, and that their united toilets had not cost a pound sterling, we must admit that they were wonderful women.

Poor Bab had been half the day at a lady's-

## THE MARRYING MAN

wardrobe purchaser's, or, rather, there, for the sum of thirteen and the Eldertons could scrape togeth a lawyer can earn by a few scrape she, by adroit bargaining, had pairs of white satin shoes, four dit and four wreaths, all really not m for wear, and which had originally ten guineas. Another proof how lose their value when the first glo is worn off.

"Well, I must say, I think w markably well," said Bab; "but snows! we cannot walk. What about getting there?"

"It would be rather late to now," said Elder, "if I had not a provision. In the first place, I Winter."

"What! is she going?"

"Yes. When I heard from A that Captain Delamere was going to ask us, I told her of his intent

insisted on being with me (as if by chance). Of course he could not do less than ask her: she accepted the invitation; and they have vowed eternal friendship."

"Well, you go with her: but what is to become of us?"

"I am not a person accustomed to think only of myself, young ladies; had I been more so, I should be well off now, with my talents! had I no incumbrances, I should now be independent. However, what I have arranged is this: I find that the Brighton stage, with but one inside, is to go next door to Captain Delamere's, namely to Lord Loftus's, to take up the butler and the housekeeper, who are going this evening to Brighton; and, to oblige me, and as a return for a handsome present Mrs. Winter gave him once, when she and I went on a private trip to Brighton, (something about Delamere,) the coachman has promised to set you all down at Delamere's door. The worst of it is, you will be obliged to go rather early; you must be there by half-past six; and I dare

look about you in the meantime, a number of knickknacks mad ladies who are in love with hir can get a few new patterns and i works."

"Do you know," said Bab, "
made some conquest, Pris: for
good-looking young man, very
and seemingly wealthy, walking
and it seems some one has given
to get her to tell my Christian n
I shall not long have to wear of
fancy-works, and my voice in sir
"If such a thing should hap

the man has any money, I hope forget all I have done for you. H

"Oh! when I saw him yesterday, he was in a gig. He does not appear elegant, but I think he seems wealthy. If he should call, do you think I had better receive him?"

"Why, yes, dear Bab, we are not in circumstances to stand on ceremony. Oh! I declare I have been so busy all day, I have quite forgotten to look at our last advertisement. As you are dressed, Bab, just step down to Mrs. Gibbs and ask her to lend us her paper. If you say where you are going to dine, I am sure she will."

Bab, after a long confabulation with Mrs. Gibbs, who was at tea, for all the Eldertons were great talkers and boasters, came back with the paper.

All eagerly crowded round it.

"Oh, what a shame! What a wretch that editor is! Here it is in the very worst part of the paper! No one will see it — there's five shillings quite thrown away! Just read it, Bab."

Bab read :-

"Reduced by misfortune from the summit of prosperity to the depths of adversity, four young ladies (sisters) of exalted birth, of the most elegant refinement of manners, the most cultivated accomplishment of mind, and the most modest and shrinking delicacy, wish to devote a few hours, either occasionally or otherwise, for a trifling emolument, to the instruction of youth of the male sex."

"The male sex!" shrieked all the sisters, aghast. "Oh that wretch at the office! He has done this to spite me, because I said five shillings was very dear for so small an advertisement!"

"Never mind," said Pris, "we have him—whether intentional or not, matters little! We can insist on his inserting the advertisement again, as we can prove it was written 'female sex;' he must put it in for nothing, and then chance may give it a good place; and, in the mean time, if any young man does answer this—I don't see, as long as it's quite private, that

there's any harm in teaching a youth music or drawing—I'll undertake him myself!"

"No, no, that's not fair. If any such person does answer, as I put in the advertisement, I've a right to teach him," said Bab.

"I," said Lavinia, " could teach him best; for I have taught boys!"

"Yes," said Dorothea, "but what is that to me? Why, when I was teaching Alderman Hopkins's family to dance, I actually taught the old alderman himself the quadrille figures. Ah, if I hadn't been a fool, I do think I might have had him! But I was only a foolish girl about thirty, then, and he was sixty! However, poor fellow, he took such pains, and was so generous—I declare, if no one knew it, I'd rather teach old men than young girls. I think I should be the best fitted, if any answer does come."

"Well," said Pris, much offended, "don't let us quarrel about what will probably never happen. If any man does answer, we can draw lots for him. But now, remember the great and I'm sure I get no than exertions; but I fear things to and ruin without me; and, ur all are, I should grieve to see to "Oh! no; we would all take be very steady. Poor dear Polittle change!"

All wanted to be rid of Pris.

"Well, we shall see! Now
do and say. Here, you'd bett
shilling, in case there is a ro
don't play if you can help it; an
the stage. If Delamere looks
you are come in a four-in-han
done wonders to get you there;
your own skill to get yourselve

home between them. Now look about you, and copy any fancy works you may see, which are likely to take. I dare say I shall be very late for Mrs. Winter will not be easily satisfied with her glass or her maid, when she is to dine with Delamere. Now, eat as much as you can without seeming greedy—it is well to lay in against a fast-day—have your senses about you—don't say anything which any one can repeat to your disadvantage; and, remember, it's bad policy to be satirical about any one."

The dressing-room of innocent and youthful beauty is everywhere in some respects the same. True the toilet may be more or less costly in its accessories—the abigail more or less adroit in her manœuvres, and the "Belinda" more or less patient and enduring. But in all Hope hovers over the glass, and Expectation lightens the toil.

There, "robed in white," and in all "the beauty of dishevelled charms," the maiden is frequently fairer to the eye of taste than when the coiffeur has forced the rich hair into the fashion of the day; and when as to the robe,

" Alas! so tight the nymph has laced it,

That not a charm of Beauty's mould

Presumes to stay where Nature placed it!"

But that complaint belongs not much to the present day, while, thanks to fashion, the Grecian head-dress, and the easy, though somewhat antique cut of the robe, seems prompted by nature herself, compared to the giraffe heads and gigot sleeves of three or four years ago.

Aurelia was growing each minute more dazzling beneath the hands of Flounce; and Lucy, already dressed with simple elegance, was assisting Jessica, whom she wished to appear to advantage at Delamere's party.

Jessica was in high spirits: a box had been sent from Paris by the grateful Marcus: a letter from him informed them that a fashio able milliner, at whose house he was lodgin had offered him unlimited credit. He had therefore (after much entreaty) commenced tick with her, and had sent them a few échantillons of her taste and skill. There were all

there was for Jessy an evening dress of the richest silver-grey satin, trimmed with black blonde, and with a black blonde mantilla, of a taste so exquisite and new, and so very becoming to Jessy, that she resolved to brave every thing and wear it that evening. In this determination she was vehemently upheld by Lucy; and, by that strange chance which sometimes favours dynasties and sometimes dresses, Marcus, though he had only described her size and figure, had done it so accurately, that never was there a more perfect fit.

The soft, silver grey of the satin suited the style of Jessy's beauty, and the black blonde threw out the fairness of her complexion; then, too, the dress had that nameless grace and charm, which a first-rate French milliner alone can give, and which lends a sort of style even to a dowdy! Lucy, whose good taste suggested that there were few ornaments (and Certainly none of Jessica's) which would not spoil the chaste elegance of her dress, insisted

on her wearing, upon this important day, hown choicest gems, namely, on her forehead crescent of brilliants, and on her bosom a croof the same.

Jessy had never been half so elegant dressed,—she had never looked half so beautiful; and, as Lucy fastened around her throat the narrow black velvet ribbon to which the dimond cross was suspended, she said, witears in her eyes, "Dear Jessy, it is not to first time you have borne my cross!"

Their toilet being at length complete, to cousins hastened to the library: here they four Sir William, who desired them to excuse him, the score of indisposition. All ordinary partimere wearisome to him; he required the ecitement of play, and you might as well expethe brandy-drinker to be satisfied with water the epicure with plain dishes, or the historical romance reader with unadorned history, the gambler to find pleasure in a quiet party or in friendly converse.

" Sweet Jessy!" said Sir William, em

bracing her (for since the scene between them, which we have already recorded, on the few occasions when they did meet, he was warmly affectionate in manner, and very flattering in his remarks), "sweet Jessy, I wouldn't be a young man at Delamere's this evening, unless I had rank and fortune worthy of you; and if I had, I would be at your feet to-morrow."

- "Dear uncle, you will spoil me!"
- "You have spoilt me for all other girls, Jessy."

At this moment Flounce rushed in, quite out of breath.

"La, miss! I'm in such a fluster all over: running up stairs and down, without stopping, is too much for the delicacy of my constitution—excuse me, miss (panting); I haven't yet recovered the equilibrium of my breath."

"What did you want with me, Flounce?"

"Why, miss,—oh! dear, I'm sure there must be something wrong in my interior! The truth is, my lady desired me to despatch myself to you, to say, 'she hopes you're going in that

have the use of all hers and Miss gold hornaments, or miss's yellow v you like it better."

"Tell my aunt and cousin, I a obliged to them, but I am already d grey satin Mr. Marcus has sent me, not mean to make any alteration, as and Lucy say it suits me very well."

"My lady wished, particular, mis should do your 'air in one Grecian pla thinks you make it too woluminous 'ead."

" Miss Lucy has already dressed taste and mine, Flounce."

"Very well, miss, I must say you uncommon becoming: and if Miss I

"Do you not think Mr. Burridge will be hurt at your not wearing his gift, Jessy?"

"I should hope he will not be so unjust, dear uncle. I have worn it several times to please him, but I am resolved not to disfigure myself to-night—I would rather not go—I will not always be such a martyr."

"Of course not, my love! I appland your spirit," said Sir William, who saw she was resolved.

Lady Vernon hastened down, followed by Aurelia: "Really, Jessica, as poor Mr. Burridge is to be of the party, I think you should wear his very handsome present! I am sure he has calculated on seeing you in it this evening, as I have too."

"So have I," said Aurelia, " and you can have all my gold ornaments."

"Any one who has calculated on my disfiguring myself this evening, has reckoned ill," said Jessy, laughing at their spiteful eagerness; and throwing open the carriage-cloak she had put on to go in, "now, what can you object to, in my new dress, aunt?"

"I have a great mind not to go at all," said Lady Vernon, who saw that, for once, Jessica looked far lovelier and more elegant, if not actually as handsome, as Aurelia. "I hate hurting people's feelings; besides, every one will recognise Lucy's crescent and cross, and it seems so very contemptible—people will say we have a wardrobe in common!"

"If you fear that, aunt," said Jessy, colouring, "I will remove them," and she prepared to do so.

"Madam!" exclaimed Sir William to his wife, his voice trembling with passion, "how dare you insult my niece in my presence? Jessy, oblige me and Lucy by wearing those diamonds to-night. See—Lucy has tears in her eyes! I will go to Hamlet's, myself, to-morrow morning, and as soon as possible you shall have a cross and crescent, exactly like those. I thought I told you, madam, never to purchase an orna-

ment for your daughters, without getting a similar one for my niece? — Now, set off; it is getting late—and beware! Let me see no more of this spirit! I have yet a great deal to say to you on the subject, madam, and request you will come to my dressing-room, on your return.—Kiss me, Lucy, I shall not forget that you are a good girl; but, in point of beauty, Jessy cuts you all out to-night! Farewell, my love—go and turn all heads, or break all hearts!"

"I am sure I was only anxious about Mr. Burridge," whined her ladyship; "I hate to hurt the feelings of any one."

"Then let me see, in future, some respect shewn to those of my niece! You'll all be beggars soon," he murmured, in a low voice, "unless her interest with Burridge avails."

## CHAPTER VII.

ALL was smiling and smooth at Delamere's splendid banquet, which, as Elder had prophesied, was not served till nearly eight o'clock.

Ah! who that saw those cheerful faces, a heard those light and merry laughs, would ha deemed what anxieties had attended the toile of all—what fell disasters had befallen Burridg and what wearisome contrivances had been effected by the Eldertons!

And so it is in all things! — Who the lightly skims over the last new novel, ponder on the many anxious hours it has cost the author? Who that gazes on the dazzling ballet remembers the wearing and exhausting toil of

the dancers? Who that listens to the silver roulades of a Grisi, thinks upon the tedious process by which such excellence was won? And so, through all things,—down to Burridge and the Eldertons!

To an eye which loved the picturesque, Burridge would, perhaps, have been more attractive in his shaggy snuff-coloured wig, brown cheeks, bushy eye-brows, green spectacles, and loose attire, than as now flushed, frizzed, pinched in, his eye-brows pruned, divested of his goggles, and evidently purblind: but then, how few are really lovers of the picturesque! Already one great misfortune has happened to him: thinking to hand down Jessica, he has manœuvred to get near a lady in white, and does not perceive his mistake till he has offered his arm to Bab Elderton! And Bab is not a woman to resign an advantage, whether conferred by chance or by design.

The poor Eldertons had spent about an hour alone in the drawing-room before any one else arrived; but that was an inconvenience which they had expected, and one for which the were prepared, - they were prepared, too, for the sneers and glances of surprise of the halfdressed footmen, both at their early appearance and their arrival in a Brighton stage! But on can nerve the mind to any anticipated calamity and the Eldertons could toss their heads an look the footmen to scorn. But what the were not prepared for was the rude graspin = conduct of the coachman and the guard, who in utter violation of their compact with Elder, and all the known laws of honour, insisted on shilling each. In any other circumstances Eldertons would have resisted such extortion. But Delamere was seen in the distance, drive home to dress for dinner; the coachman a guard were swearing and expostulating - t footmen privately jeering, sneering, and win ing-the snow falling fast, the wind blowing loud, and so (we cannot extenuate their wea ness, but trust the reader will not despise the for it,) they gave up two of the shillings which Elder had lent them in case of a round gam

and then, anxious not to come in contact with Delamere on their descent from the stage, hastened to the drawing-room.

The Countess of Mandeville, fortified by spirits of lavender, ether, and paregoric elixir, propped up by pillows, and exhilarated by the sight of her boy,—who was dressed like a little prince, and in triumphant spirits at heing allowed to dine at table, and to sit near his favourite Jessy,—looked very handsome, and felt, what in truth she was,—almost well.

She was a fine, fair, stately woman, and was dressed, in honour of Delamere, in velvet and jewels,—her usually pale cheeks were flushed, and her eyes sparkled with maternal pride.

Miss Tadpole was looking her best—all in white. She was rather disconcerted to see the Eldertons all in white too; but then her own dress was a rich new satin, and theirs were old, vamped up muslins. She had round her neck a set of real pearls with which the Countess had presented her, while they had strings of the paltriest imitation round theirs.

Delamere paid her the greatest sible, not wishing, as she was I degree his *protégée*, to see he mortified, and the imitative I became almost too particular in

A really elegant man never much advantage, as in doing this own house. It is one of the on which it is de bon ton for the quisite to exert himself to ple most fashionable feel called upon their cold nonchalance, and be cordial in manner, and entertacan, in conversation.

Jessica was in high spirits.
welcomed them so warmly; he lo

pearance; and he had managed so cleverly to place her near him, and little Egbert on her other side.

Mrs. Winter, elegant and pale, (but that was optional with her,) was all winning grace and affability to every one; she seemed a little depressed, and sighed gently, when her eyes met Osmond's; and flattered Aurelia almost into confidence; she smiled sweetly at Jessica, and then raised her fine eyes to Delamere—and there was resignation and devotion in their gaze; and he said to himself, "I am very fortunate in having that lovely highminded woman for my friend—a blunderer would have lost her for ever."

Besides the party already known to the reader, there were two young men; the one Mr. Marvel Brown, a young guardsman, of rather shewy exterior, but who had the not uncommon foible of aiming at singularity in the cut of his hair, and of his coat; and, as he was neither as handsome nor as gifted as Count D'Orsay, his eccentricities were voted absurdities, and his

fashions followed by no one but himself. He was what is so common in real life, and souncommon in a book, a thing of shreds and patches; a mixture of many tastes and many qualities, with nothing prominent or decided about him. He was something of a sportsman, and occasionally used sporting terms in conversation; something of a poet, and adroit at quotation; something of a wit, and something of a punster; a great wonder maker about himself; and so blind did this foible make him, that sometimes his hearer was called upon to wonder at his activity, sometimes at his sloth, sometimes at his energy, sometimes at his apathy, sometimes at his epicurism, sometimes at his abstemiousness-and all perhaps within the same hour. When we add to this sketch that he was a general flirt, and that he fixed his large blue eyes, with an apparent intensity of passion, upon every pretty woman he saw; that he had fine hair, fine teeth, a ready smile, and a small but well formed figure, you have as vivid a portrait as we can give of so

neutral-tinted a personage as Mr. Marvel Brown.

Seymour, a young clergyman, and college friend of Delamere's. His air was distinguished, and his person elegant; he was known to be a first-rate classic, and exceedingly well read in modern literature. He had no pretension, and formed a vivid contrast in every thing to the restless Mr. Marvel Brown. Through Delamere's interest, the Countess of Mandeville had just offered him a desirable living in Hertfordshire; and Delamere had told him, that out of the Vernon and Elderton party he might choose unto himself a wife, but warned him that the Tadpole was already appropriated.

Mr. Marvel Brown had tried the effect of his deep impassioned gaze on Aurelia, Jessica, and even Lucy! Mrs. Winter had met and returned it; and the Tadpole had made her futur jealous, by whispering to him as Mr. Brown was trying its effect on her. "Look, Joey, look! you've a powerful rival there! and such a nice

cée, and fiercely at Mr. Ma the eyes of the latter ro fixed by turns on all the I quest was the pride of M be what they might!"

"And so, Seymour," he dulated voice (for he prided his tones as on his glances), Miss Ogleton, after all. I of his bargain; for thoug some blood, there's a goo about the hoof."

"If I were a woman, Mar Seymour, "and you used y about me, I should almost v that I might give you a kick the Ogletons are the mother's thoroughbred; but Brook himself, who is he? a mere nobody, I believe. I beg pardon, I forgot; he's your particular friend. But of what family are the Brooks?"

"The Brooks? Nearly related to the family of Rivers, I believe," said Seymour.

Marvel Brown did not understand the pun; so he went on, "By Jove, I didn't think he'd so much blood in him!" And Miss Elderton here came in, with, "What, Lord Rivers? Let me see, could that be the Lord Rivers that was so intimate with my great uncle, poor dear Sir James? He gave him a diamond snuff-box. No, no, Sir James gave him a diamond snuff-box; and he gave Sir James his portrait; and yet,—no. Whose portrait was it, Bab, at Elderton Hall, in the bag wig, and the mulberry coat? Was it Lord Rivers's, or poor dear Sir James's?"

"Ah! the description you give of it," simpered Miss Tadpole, "exactly corresponds to that of a portrait which we had at Tadpole Villa, of Sir Joseph died in 1739: he wa
No, let me see—which was he,
a tory? I know he was one."

"Sir Joseph, ma'am, was not?
you allude to," said the Tadpol
she did not like to have it ima
father had flourished more than
fore: "And poor dear Sir Jos
tory, and had no friends of doul

"Oh! now, I remember, I h
dear Sir James was an ultra-tor
I may be out about the date of I
ma'am, in what year did Sir Jos

"I don't like to be reminded
sobbed Miss Tadpole. "Let u

ject; it affects me too much."-

she saw Dempster bending anniously over his agitated fiancée; "but you must be aware, madam, you introduced the subject. It is not very soothing to my feelings to discuss pour dear Sir James!" And Miss Elderton tried to get up a counter tragedy; while the company did their best to repress the smiles that would arise at the mournful finale of the ludianous combat between poor dear Sir James and pour dear Sir Joseph, who had so long been mingled with the dust, but were thus revived and formed into the field by their respective descendants.

"Ah! let them both rest in peace," grawled Burridge, in an undertone, to Lary. "I never heard of either of them before, and I never wish to hear of either of them again. When men have done anything to immortalise themselves, one must make up one's mind to hearing their descendants boast of them; but when they haven't—why, when they 're dead, at least there ought to be an end of them. I'm sure, I hope if I ever have any progeny, they won't drag me out of my grave to brag about me."

Lucy was astounded. She, who could she be? alas! alas! what were Tadpole, or the Elderton Burridge fancying Jessica "How downcast she lo moment Delamere was sa brought the blush to Jessy she's angry with me for n stairs: but the fact is, Luc and I miss my spectacles; one (and his voice sank) o Jess: and before I discove arm was so clutched I the be free again. I wish yo Lucy, when you go up sta her eve "

ed Burridge; "and I don't believe she likes Delamere. She's a sensible girl, and hates coxcombs: if she'd liked coxcombs, she'd never have fancied me."

And then, to show his disapproval of Lucy, he turned away, and devoted himself to Bab Elderton, who, being the youngest and the best looking, was, with her rouge and her garland, rather a fine woman, in his dim eyes.

Lucy was not sorry to be able to devote all her attention to Edward Seymour, her other neighbour, he was so graceful, so intelligent, and so unaffected, and he seemed so much to like Lucy's quiet mirth and good-humoured espièglerie; and they talked of poetry, of Delamere's poem, of the review in the ——, and there Lucy was quite at home; and she had extorted from Edward Seymour a confession that he occasionally wrote too, and he had promised her copies of some of his productions.

We have said that Lucy was not pretty: but she was elegant and interesting, with a clear pale complexion, soft eyes, a kind smile, and a remarkably graceful figure. On this particular evening, pleased with he eneighbour, and animated by his exclusive a tention, her eyes and her colour brightened; and if she did not look actually pretty she did look something better—at least so Edward thought. He was, as most scholars are, a great admirer of female beauty. He thought Aurelian a Juno, and Jessica a Psyche, but he thought he would rather Lucy were his wife than either of them.

At one glance, too, he saw that there was not much heart in Aurelia—in half a glance he saw that Jessica had already resigned here; and then he wondered if Lucy had a lover and, if not, whether he could please her; and he talked to her of the country, of his promise parsonage, of flowers, of books, of the duties of a clergyman, and even of a clergyman's wife and the more they conversed the more were they delighted with each other.

Meanwhile the Countess of Mandeville happrivately taken a "dinner-pill," and had formed an intimacy with Elder; indeed, she thoughter so pleasant and "motherly" a woman,

alas! poor Elder!—that she had decided on asking her to supply the Tadpole's place on the approaching vacancy.

Aurelia, meanwhile, had been flirting with Marvel Brown, who had paid her some fine compliments. Lady Vernon had concealed her ill-humour by ridiculing Miss Tadpole and her lover's attentions, in an undertone, and by adroit attacks on Jessy and Delamere; while Delamere, to keep up Dempster's devotion, had paid Miss Tadpole several public compliments; and when the dessert came on, had sent her all the most flaming devices from the bon-bons, in selecting the mottoes of which Jessica and Egbert had assisted him.

Delamere was all kindness and courtesy to every one. He had contrived to intimate to Burridge his admiration of his waist-coat, and he had praised Macbotcher and his macintosh overalls. He had drawn out in adroit argument the elegant scholarship and classical acumen of Edward Seymour. He had recommended a new and really clever medical work to the Countess. He had enabled Marvel

brought in "poor dear Sir Jan been so rudely driven out of th their ancestors and their ancesto had talked of a subscription for with a distressed young family,was no other than their own; ina was the poor woman, and the the young family."

To Aurelia, he had sent an ap with a message, regretting that golden one to which she was s and, at Lucy's request, he had guineas for the distressed "your nised by the Eldertons."

Burridge had given a reluct the same charity, with a growl And Marvel Brown, who sat during the beginning of dinner, making a wonder of the number of beggars who had beset him that day, and the sums which he had given them, and had remarked that he gave away half his income to beggars, now handing a guinea, declared "it might seem odd, and he certainly was a most singular person, but it was the first time he ever put his name to a subscription—on principle,—he always refused, as he hated to encourage humbug."

"But, surely," said Elder, to whom this remark was particularly unpalatable—(though certainly not levelled at her, perhaps her conscience appropriated it,)—"it is better to subscribe something for a poor family whose wants I can vouch for, and whose respectability I can answer for, than to lavish money indiscriminately on street beggars:" his remark about his generosity to them had dwelt on Elder's memory.

"Street beggars? You'll hardly believe that
I never gave a farthing to a beggar in my life!"
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you gave half your ince
"That may be," sa
recovering, for he saw l
"for if I never gave
I have given many a c
a pound. And often at

'The long remember'd be Whose beard descending

You didn't see my jok take in, by Jove!"

Miss Elderton was so think people very charit nate it is a soothing belimeanwhile was a flourish Burridge feared to be t could scarce subdue her tons, after this wonderful good luck, Pris cannot make any great fuss about the two shillings we were cheated out of by the coachman and the guard. Ah! false conclusion! they ought to have known Pris better.

After all the different efforts Delamere had made to please his guests, and in which, as it has been seen, he had aimed rather at showing them off, than at shining himself, (thus performing well the grand duty of a host,) he thought he was now entitled to please himself, so he commenced an animated discussion with Jessica on literature; -and she was rejoicing over the restoration of "Mr. Lillivick to the bosom of the Kenwigs family," a reconciliation which occupied at that time the minds of all Europe; -when Lady Vernon, perceiving that her animated manner, and playful remarks, attracted general attention, gave (somewhat prematurely) the signal for the departure of the ladies.

"I shall hope soon to join you, and to renew our discussion," said Delamere to Jessica. "I shall go with Jessy," said Egbert, "for I like ladies best after dinner."

"Happy Egbert!" said Delamere, "I envy you, for so do I."

As the gentlemen rose for the ladies to withdraw (a slow process, owing to the imaginary weakness of the Countess), Seymour gazed at Lucy with an expression which spoke volumes to her heart; and Marvel Brown, at each alternate beauty or fright, as she passed him, with one which "spoke volumes" to all of them.

"The lovely Marcia towers above her sex!"
he said, as the Countess moved slowly on: then, in a deeper tone, as Aurelia passed him, "And by her graceful walk the queen of love was known!" Then, sportively, as the Tadpole passed, glancing at Dempster and Marvel, and at herself in the glass—"Like a bride full of blushes, that just lingers to take a last look in the mirror at night ere she goes." He was obliged to be quick, for the Eldertons passed; and, struck by the, to them, unwonted gaze,

looked back as they did so—"They kill and wound like Parthians as they fly!" and lastly, as Jessica passed, slowly and sonorously he repeated,

"On her white breast, a sparkling cross she wore, Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore."

She's a thoroughbred creature that! I wonder whether those pretty curls are all the gold she has to boast of?"

"Yes!" growled Burridge, to whom the remark was addressed, and who did not wish for a young and (to his mind), a dangerous rival; "she's as poor as a church mouse."

But the dining-room door has closed, the gentlemen crowd together to discuss politics, and the ladies busy themselves in the drawingroom discussing the politicians.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. WINTER has seated herself by Aureliand and while she sips her coffee is, by wheedling and adroit flattery, possessing herself of the little all that floats through the vacant head of the beauty. Lady Vernon has drawn near the prevent any great result from the adroit sifting of the woman of the world. The Tadpole is in a sweet reverie near the door on a settem (which holds but two), and she has placed he bouquet on the vacant seat,—the reader can guess for whom she is keeping it.

Elderton is by the Countess's side, she put the cream and sugar into her tea, and stronger recommends a small biscuit; the three youn Eldertons are discussing Burridge, Marvel Brown, Bab's beau, the seven-pound-eleven subscription, and the two shillings they are minus.

"If I could but get hold of Elder for a moment!" said Dorothea. "In case we play a round game, we must get some money from her."

"I'm afraid," said Lavinia, "she'll be in a great rage."

"If I could but get her bag!" said Bab; but she keeps it so tight, there's no chance."

"She has no right to the seven pounds ten shillings, no more than we have!"

"Oh!" said Bab, "she won't agree to that, as she set the subscription afloat; and the more successful she is, the more overbearing she becomes. I'm sure, I hope she will go to Mandeville castle for a time—there's no bearing her now! Don't let any of us talk to the Countess, and then of course she'll fix on Pris. Mrs. Winter, too, wishes Pris to go there—I can see that—perhaps to get rid of

her; or perhaps to have a spy on Delamere, who'll be there a good deal in the summer."

"Well," said Bab, "if we do play, I shall ask Burridge to put in for me; anything is better than a scene with Pris. You, Dolly have your shilling still; and you, Lucy?"

"Oh, I'll ask Jessica; she's so good-natured; I don't mind asking her at all!"

"Well, let us all take some more of this excellent tea and coffee; it will be long before we get anything so good again; for the more things Pris has in the closet, the more determined she is to lock it up."

Meanwhile, Lucy and Jessica sate apart, unheeded by any one but Egbert, who was making them up some bouquets of violets from the vases of flowers on the stand near them.

"That Mr. Seymour is such a delightful person, Jessy," said Lucy, blushing; "and be has been praising the review so highly, and wondering who wrote it. Actually, he attributes it to —" and her voice sank so, that we could not catch the name.

"Oh! Lucy, is it possible? Well, I am prouder of it than ever!"

" Is he not a charming person?"

"I am sure he is, Lucy, if you think so; but I have hardly seen him."

"Not seen him! why, what could you have been looking at?"

Jessy blushed; and, changing the subject, said, "How much real elegance there is in these rooms. Ah! talent is all-pervading, Lucy! one sees it as much in the arrangement of a suite of rooms, as in the conception of a poem. See of what a graceful form are those hanging lamps! I am sure he devised them! How rich, and yet how simple, are these dark crimson carpets of velvet pile! How classical the shape of the furniture! Nothing wanting, and yet nothing de trop. How preferable to the gaudy glittering papers one sees most other rooms hung with, and the toy-shop cabinets and contrivances for bringing in tasteless gilding! Oh! how very superior are these dark crimson velvet hangings, and the white marble

statues, to the frippery ornaments one sees elsewhere! Remark, too, how brilliantly the she whole is lighted—the pictures are seen as as well as if it were day!"

"But pictures are not the fashion in drawing-rooms, Jessy."

"Leave fashion to the 'genteel' school Lucy. Osmond Delamere thinks the beautiful should be the fashion of all ages. Perhaps is not the London fashion to place so man flowers on the tables, or to line the walls with rare exotics, and graceful statues; but the beautiful, in every form, is dear to the post. Those ancient Sevre vases, in their lovely contrast to the fresh bright flowers that fill the suggest an image to his mind! Those immost telles and evergreens that rise around the statue of Faith—and the rose, which has she its leaves over that sleeping Cupid—all have a moral and a charm for him! Do you see that curious antique lamp?"

"Yes; but I do not see any great beauty in it."

"Indeed! yet it has a charm for a poet, which no gay thing of or molu and crystal could ever have. That lamp he brought from Pompeii; that lamp, Lucy, may have lighted Glaucus, when he poured out his first lovesong to Ione. It may have shed its soft light in vain, while Nydia wept over a flame as profitless. It may have sent its rays through the bower of the beautiful Ione, stealing and giving lustre,-have shone on the impious festivals of Arbaces-or have lent its aid to Sallust, while he bequeathed a thought to immortality. Think, Lucy! think with what a feeling of mysterious awe a poet must rekindle a lamp, which has perhaps lighted a poet two thousand years ago! It must be like recalling the dead to life."

"Really, Jessica," said Lucy, warningly, "I think you should beware of your own enthusiasm. Remember, it is a feeling akin to madness. Glaucus, Ione, and even Nydia, are only beautiful visions of the poet's brain; and here

theus; and for me the beings with fire from Heaven, and the has placed them, are at least sacred as those where creatures have lived and moved. I love there was once a Romeo and a Julian Lammermoor—a Rebecca—a North I would almost as soon be conever was a Fair Rosamond, as ——"

"Ah, Jessica! and I belie easily be convinced even of that there are some hard at work to welcome service of stripping hi has borrowed from romance. I bant au milieu de nous comme

who hurl those bombs. Let us dwell as long as we can in that beautiful palace of illusion. Alas! too soon the world unfits one to dwell there; and those, Lucy, to whom aught of worldly stain adheres, are for ever driven from its gates!"

At this moment, a housekeeper, (neither young nor pretty,) but with a smart cap, came to ask the ladies if they wished to go up stairs into her master's boudoir, as there were some fine pictures and coins, which she could shew them. All else were unwilling to move; but Lucy read in Jessica's face so lively a wish to see Osmond Delamere's boudoir, that she proposed going, and Egbert resolved to accompany them.

"This room, miss," said the housekeeper, "is at present my master's study and dressing-room; for the library, where he habitually writes, is undergoing some improvements; but there are some curiosities here, if you choose to come in."

Lucy entered gaily; Jessica with an intense

concentration of feeling, which made her almost gasp for breath. "Are you not well, miss?" said the housekeeper. "Sit down, miss; that's Captain Delamere's over arm-chair. Here, miss, take a little of the scent!"

Jessy poured some on her hands; it was the same which he habitually used—this was no ot the perfume to revive her at that moment; but Lucy opened a window—the wintry wind came in; Lucy offered her vinaigrette;—better than all, a feeling of pride came to Jessica's aid, and, arousing herself, she declared it was merely that she had ascended the stairs too rapidly, but she was now quite recovered.

Lucy, who was in high spirits, on hearing this, ran off with Egbert to view the pictures in the corridor, to look at all the rooms, and to peep into Osmond's chamber and bath.

But Jessy remained seated where she had sunk; the room still breathed of that odour so connected with Delamere!—That fire! perhaps he had sate beside it two hours ago. A book was open where he had left it; there, too, was the "Magazine," containing her "Review" of his "Poem:" he had been reading it—some parts were marked; and here, even here, where, perhaps, he had never given one thought to her, her spirit had presided over his self-communings, her mind had enchained, her praises had enchanted him.

She felt at that moment proud of her own talents—proud of its omnipresence! Her soul had shared Osmond's solitude; her spirit had soothed, had exhilarated his; praises she would not have spoken to him for worlds—had stolen to his heart; she had been to him the unseen Egeria—she had blest him, and in that thought she herself was blest!

"You must excuse all the books and papers, miss, being in such disorder—it is no fault of mine—I've made many attempts to sort and dust them, and once I'd put them in beautiful order, when, lo! and behold, master said I'd done him a great hinjury! He's the temper of

a lamb, miss, in every thing else—but if one touches his manuscripts, he's a lion at once!

"Ah," said Jessica, smiling, "it was has manuscripts that made him a lion at once!"

"Yes, miss," said Mrs. Willis, not quies understanding, "I may do what I like with these splendid things on the toilet, and even with all the fine sachets and bouquets sent him, and he'll never say a cross word; but if I happen to burn an old scrap of paper, he quite put out, miss. The other day, miss, Sevres vase for pot-pourri, that the counters sent him, fell a-two, in my hands, just as I was wiping it, and when I told him of it, saying wasn't any fault of mine, and showing how fell a-two, he only laughed;—but when I sort his papers, he was downright angry!"

Jessica turned over the leaves of the "Review;" she wished to see what passage Delamere had marked: "Ah! miss, that's 'Review' of master's own poem," said Mrewillis. "La! miss, when first that poem came

out, we was all as proud as if we'd done it ourselves; and master gave me a copy of it, miss, to keep; but I'm the only one of the servants he gave one to."

"You have, probably, been with him long?"

"Oh, yes, miss, from the time he was a boy. Have you read the 'Poem,' miss?"

" Yes."

"How wonderful it is wrote, to be sure, miss—some parts so grand, I can't understand them at all—and some so natural, it's nothing but just like nature! Why, la! miss, where the lady dies, the lady 'Lucy—'I'm sure, miss, the picture of her is as like my poor Susan, who died of a decline, as ever was; and the way her lover, the Lord Arthur, went about, was just like her poor William,—and her mother, though she was such a great lady, miss, what she felt was exact as I felt—it seemed to me like losing my poor Susan all over again—only, of course, miss, more grand! But really, miss, I told my master, I hoped he wouldn't be

offended, but he'd only made them all just like poor people in their feelings; and the grand lady didn't feel nothing but what I'd felt myself."

" And what did Captain Delamere say?"

" And do you think it is so?"

"I like it best, Miss, because it's the longes and have took out all that nat'ral part about the lady's death, and her mother and love La! miss, what feeling master must have But don't look at those old books, miss—loo here!" And she pointed to a magnificer dressing-case, and several glittering toys.

Jessica smiled. "How can he, with such a mind as his, care for such trifling things?"

"La! miss, he don't care for them; only in all things he has an eye for beauty."

The remark struck Jessica. Yes, she said to herself, the woman is right—it is not coxcombry, it is the love of the beautiful.

"Besides, miss, he's rich, and he's a right to please himself; and he knows that all that the rich spend comes round to the poor sooner or later: but as for caring for them, miss! why, when the devil tempted James the footman to steal a dressing-case Prince C- sent him, ten times handsomer than this, he wouldn't prosecute him, though he might have got it back again if he had done so at first: but he hushed it all up for the sake of James's respectable old parents; and he spoke to him so kind, he quite converted him, and he has turned out quite reformed, and is married, and set up in business. Master isn't one for capital punishments, miss, or sending people post haste into the other world-he thinks

imperance, in a Sunday pap know how many lads he ha what kind things he does infirm. I should like to : who prints that paper, who art another?"

Mrs. Willis was actually we ter's defence, and in her hatre printer. Jessica laughed: but few had so zealous a friend.

"Well, miss," continued only hope, some day, master some beautiful, rich, grand ye good, and clever, and handson would be a world of pities if he or throwed himself away, and cherish the interest, which now my pride should make me crush!

She looked in Delamere's toilet-glass—her eyes were full of tears; Lucy had entered the room, and Mrs. Willis was showing her an ottoman, the joint work of the countess and Miss Tadpole. A chain Delamere usually wore lay on the toilet; an instinct of affection made Jessy raise it to her lips: it was redolent of the perfume he wore, and she hastily put it down. As she did so a tear fell on it; and never yet has chain of gold glittered with a purer gem than that tear of passionate but unselfish devotion, issuing from the very heart of a nobleminded maiden.

"I shall steal the pen he has been writing with," said Lucy, seizing it: "perhaps some inspiration may cling to it."

How much more daring is friendship than love. Lucy had done what Jessica had longed to do, yet dared not.

"I'm sure, miss, master will feel highly honoured," said Mrs. Willis, curtseying as they took their leave.



in love with my master; and if you countess I shouldn't have any object but, as it is, it wouldn't do, not by of means; I'm sure Mr. Wilson 'l opinion—my master ought to mal match in the land.

### CHAPTER IX.

THE "gentlemen," as all (however undeserving of the title) are by courtesy called, who came from the dinner-table to the drawing-room, made their appearance a few minutes after Jessica and Lucy had returned thither. Dempster took his seat by Miss Tadpole the more eagerly because Delamere affected to dispute it with him. He hovered a little while about the Countess and Lady Vernon, and then, he scarcely knew how or why, sat down between Lucy and Jessica. Poor Jessica! all she had been told of him was yet busy at her heart: all the good she had heard of him from Mrs. Willis, and the poor woman's evident pride in him, itself so great a tribute, was like

a pure and fragrant oil, feeding the fla was already consuming her heart. guish it she now felt was vain; all were bounded to its concealment.

There is a peculiar feeling when locathe face of one of whom we have just good or noble trait; but if it be the fact the heart will send its tribute through and feeling this, Jessica kept hers fix little Parisian grey satin shoe, which had sent; and Delamere's followed in direction.

"What a very pretty shoe!—ren have not presumed to praise the for shoe is not English, surely?"

"No: it is from Paris, sent by Mar know my cousin Marcus?"

"Oh, yes: a good-tempered boy."

"A boy! he would call you out if you: but, boy or not, he is the kindes creature! my best and earliest friend!

Delamere thought of Lady Vernor tion, and jealousy paid him its first v all first visits, short and disagreeable: but, alas! such visits grow longer every time. To think of his sending her those shoes! he must have known the size of her foot: perhaps he sent her that beautiful dress, too! He was just going to ascertain, when Lady Vernon called him to use his influence to obtain a little music.

He was scarcely gone, when Burridge, with a large bump on his forehead, (from fancying a door to be open when it was shut,) came, in no very good humour, and took his place.

"I know I wish I were in bed," he said:
"don't you, Lucy?"

"Yes, I wish you were," said Lucy, laughing.

"I suppose that 's wit," growled Burridge:
"I meant, don't you wish you were in bed? and
you, Miss Jessica?" for he was piqued to see
she had not got on his yellow silk dress.

"No," she said, "I am very well amused. Surely it is a very pleasant party—what fault have you to find with it?" "Pleasant!—why, it's so dark I can hard see an inch before me; and I've knocked a head against something twice in coming stairs. Then I took Miss Elderton down in mistake for you, Jess; and I've spoilt my nowaistcoat by dropping some gravy on it,—a all for want of light. I'll go to no more part till I'm married. A married man has some of to see to him; and he needn't be figged out, a pinched in, so that he can hardly breather walk; and he can wear his spectacles."

Here a thundering sound startled Burns and all beside. Bab and Dorothea Elderton's commenced an overture of their own arranging while Lucy tugged a harp accompaniment, if in unison! Every one thought it lasted who long, and then Elder herself sat down and proformed a voluntary, alas! even longer. Moreover, which was now intreated to sing; she was really fine singer. Delamere pressed her. "No she said, fixing her eyes upon him, "I have not sung for the two months! I have no spirit, now. Do

you ask it of me," she added, in a low voice, "it is so sad to sing with a heavy heart!" Delamere pressed the hand which he had taken to lead her to the pianoforte, and looking round, saw the Tadpole evidently expecting to be asked. He had scarcely extended his hand before hers was placed in it.—Dempster followed, to turn over the leaves. Miss Tadpole thundered through Steibelt's Storm! Delamere set the fashion of applauding her; a thunderbolt seemed to have fallen on Dempster, for he stood transfixed with admiration; then, seeing Delamere leading her in triumph to her seat, followed, more enamoured than ever.

Edward Seymour hung over Lucy while she sang a beautiful air from Norma. Aurelia, affecting a sweet timidity, declined playing. Lady Vernon proposed that Jessica should play a duet with Lucy; but Lucy insisted on her singing.

"Well, then, sing a duet: Jessy sings a very good second."

"No, no," said Lucy, "I want Jessica to

gaze, but Jessica was too much embarathink of her ladyship. Seeing there escape, and blushing deeply, she took lamere's guitar, and saying, "You with punished for your pertinacity, by he very silly song, to a very paltry a began—

### JESSICA'S SONG.

There's a Love that is couch'd upon rose
And fed upon all that is sweet!
There's a Love that, all drooping, repose
Where yew-trees and cypresses meet!
That bright winged Love, who is sleeping
Is the offspring of Pleasure, so fair!
But the sad one in solitude weeping,
Oh! he is the child of Despair!
See that gay Love from slumber awaking
He smiles, while his votaries sigh;
Their tears from his rainbow-wings shaki
He flies!—wings were lent him to fly!

The air was so plaintive, and the voice so sweet, that the rooms rang with applause, and the song was encored.

"A sad moral!" said Edward Seymour to Lucy, "that no love is lasting, unless it is unhappy. Do you believe so, too?"

"No," said Lucy; "it is poetical, but it is not true, I am sure; as the happiest people are the healthiest,—the happiest love lives the longest."

"Osmond!" said little Egbert, "sing the song you wrote about all the ladies you fell in love with abroad."

"That would be a very long song, I should think," said Marvel Brown, who wished to be himself an object of interest. But Egbert's request was seconded so earnestly, that Osmond could not escape; so, after premising that it was almost impromptu, had never been committed to writing, and was composed rather for Dempster than himself, he began, to a very lively air.

#### DELAMERE'S SONG.

I have roam'd thro' every quarter Of this wildly-pleasant world, I have follow'd Gallia's daughter, While she Fashion's flag unfurl'd.

In Parisian salons gay,
I have own'd the short-lived flamme—
But I learnt to balancer
Ere I was caught in chaines des dames.

All unscathed by French coquette,
Pleasure's sea I skimm'd along,
And from midnight gondolet
Pour'd to dark-eyed maid my song 1

Here, I said, Romance and Passion Dwell, Venetian girl, with you! But I found it was her fashion To be rather fond than true.

On Vienna's maid I ponder:

Downcast eye! and tranquil breast!

Love I thought can never wander

From that soft and quiet nest;

But I found eternal spinning
In the dizzy waltz's twirl
Was the only way of winning—
A better waltzer won the girl!

See me next o'er mountains flitting, To Zurich's maid I sent a missive; But her soul was in her knitting, And her heart was in her lessive.\*

Then I said, ah! wherefore wander? Why, fond heart, so vainly roam? All thou seekest dwelleth yonder! Yonder, in thine island home!

There, in eyes of matchless splendour, Constancy and Genius reign; Hearts are innocent as tender, Virtue rivets Beauty's chain!

Osmond had begun by playfully addressing his song to the Tadpole, who sate in all the sweet confusion of conscious beauty and a conscious fiancée: all were animated in praise of Delamere's song; and the ladies so much so, that Marvel Brown grew very jealous.

"That," he whispered to Aurelia, "is not an impromptu. Now, I do sometimes make a dozen impromptus in a single evening. At Cam-

<sup>\*</sup> The lessive is an immense family-wash, which in Switzer-land takes place only twice a year. It lasts about a month each time, and long before its commencement, and after its completion, it engrosses all the powers, mental and bodily, of the Swiss ladies, who pique themselves on being good ménagères, and would be better if they made less fuss about it. During the lessive they are in constant déshabille both of mind and body, and very cross to all but the initiated.

bridge, I used to be called 'Improvel,' and even at school; but the lisped in numbers, for the numbers

"Will you not sing something said Aurelia.

"I cannot refuse you. Common obey," he replied, in a louder tone the guitar: "here is an answer I im Moore's beautiful song, 'Go where thee.'

# MARVEL BROWN'S SONG.

I go where Glory waits me,
But, while Fame elates me,
Oh! I'll remember thee!
Other arms may press me,
Dearer friends caress me,
All the joys that bless me
Sweeter far may be!
But when joys are dearest,
And when friends are nearest,
Oh, I'll remember thee!

Here an accident, not uncomm promptu geniuses, befell Marvel—if failed him, just as the risible muscle sent became almost uncontrollable.

"Well," growled Burridge, "writing answers to songs is an easy trade;" and, unasked, he began to hum the words as they are written in the beautiful original; but a round game was proposed, and Burridge said, "Well, Jess, I consider those who call themselves the flite the most ill-bred people in the world, to propose cards when I was singing."

"But you sung so low no one could hear you. You seemed to be only doing it to amuse yourself."

"Well, I don't want to amuse them; but Delamere knows I sing, and it is but good breeding to ask one when one is known to be musical."

Jessica could easily have obtained silence for the songster, but she did not like to see one who had many good qualities, and who had been kind to her, the laughing-stock of the room; and so she whispered, "Come and be revenged by winning all their money!" And in that hope Burridge hobbled to the table. Here Delamere contrived to separate him from Jessica; and his form Bab, was soon on one side of him, w on the other.

"Put in for me, dear Mr. Burri said Bab, playfully—"I've no cha Burridge did not seem to hear h

"You and I will be partners," daunted Bab—" put in half-a-crow

"A shilling's enough for any or "Well, put one in, then."

Burridge remained a momen at length, and when Bab had jus applying to Elder, he slowly dro

luctant shilling.

The game was a very merry of Brown formed a partnership we Edward Seymour with Lucy, De Jessica, the Tadpole with her Burridge was forced into a firm with Winter declined playing, but Delamere's and Jessica's hands. Expinto a partnership with Elder, and boisterously happy of the party.

neighbours in the country, and they had many subjects of conversation in common. Bab and Burridge won the pool; for Bab had genius and energy, and Burridge had caution and capital. The winnings amounted to five pounds, for some had played high for a round game. Bab proposed cutting for the pool; Elder frowned in vain. They cut, and Bab won the whole.

Burridge, who, like a true egotist, had been entirely wrapped up in his game, and had not given one thought to love or Jessica, was now in a suppressed rage. He took out the shilling Bab owed him, saying—" Every one his due. I was a great fool not to leave well enough alone." Then, without another word to any one, he groped his way down stairs, and got into a little hackney cab, which he had ordered to call for him.

After the departure of Burridge, lively conversation kept the rest of Delamere's guests engaged longer than is customary on the evening of a dinner-party. The young Lucy was surprised at the feeling of regret she experienced in

parting from one whose existence had been unknown to her a few hours before. But Edward Seymour had asked Lady Vernon's permission to call with some flower-seeds which he had promised her, and Lucy's heart beat high with the hope of seeing him again soon.

Love is a very encroaching visitor—if you admit him, you must make room for all his suite: first come his outriders—Hope and Expectation—then his all-engrossing, all-important self; and then his followers—Fear, Disappointment, Jealousy, Sorrow, and sometimes, perhaps, Joy: henceforth you have not a moment to yourself. Calm and youthful Lucy! ah! little do you deem how troublesome a guest you have invited, and welcomed!

Bab is not much concerned about getting home. Bab has five pounds in her pocket, and there is a coach-stand near: so, precisely because it is not now of vital importance to her, Mrs. Winter has offered to take Elder and herself, the countess can make room for Dorothea, and Lady Vernon for Lavinia Elderton.

Lady Vernon, before taking leave of Delamere, placed a scrap-book in his hand, and said, "I have brought my little album, because you promised to write me those lines on Egbert! There is nothing in it worth your perusal—only some early productions of my girls and Jessica—but it is so long since I opened it, I forget what they are."

Delamere said, he should be curious to see, and that he would insert his lines.

While, with light hearts and light steps (for the evening had been a pleasant one to all), Aurelia, Lucy, and Jessica tripped across the hall to enjoy half an hour's converse by the library fire, Lady Vernon repaired to her husband's dressing-room, to get over the expected lecture on her conduct to Jessica.

But the girls had scarcely entered the library when they saw, seated in front of the fire, his feet on the fender, wrapped in a Macintosh, and with his hat on — a figure which made Jessica exclaim with dismay—"Mr. Burridge!" She had scarcely uttered the

name when the object of their horror delibe rately blew out the one lamp on the mantelpiece, and in the total darkness which ensued. rushed forth, closed the door, and, in spite of all their resistance and screams, caught them altogether in his arms! Their shrieks rang through the house! Lady Vernon, who was slowly ascending the stairs, hastened back, fearing some one was on fire; but she had scarcely opened the door. and advanced a trembling hand with a light in it, when the candle was dashed down, her arm seized, and she herself added to the shriekin party inclosed in Burridge's Mackintosh!-Her screams (shriller than any) brought the servants from all quarters-" He is drunk He is mad! A vile horror!" screamed her ladyship, as she recognised Burridge's Macintosh and oil-skin hat: " Call in the police\_ Johnson - let him be dragged off to the= station-house!"-At that moment, flinging off hat and Macintosh, appeared the laughing handsome face and tall form of Marcus Vernon!

"Welcome, my beloved boy!" said the mother, now rushing into the arms she had been struggling so violently to escape from,—"Welcome, dearest brother! Welcome, dear cousin!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Marcus, embracing them all, "I'm welcome by comparison, I see! Not being quite sure how you would receive me after all my peccadilloes, I resolved to be welcome; so meeting with Tim paying his devoirs to Flounce (who is really a pretty girl), I, for half-a-crown, got possession for an hour of Burridge's promenade attire; and thinking that at any rate all but Jessy would prefer my arms to Burridge's, here I am,—and now make the most of me, for I'm grown tres exigeant! I've been la grande mode at Paris, I can tell you!"

"No wonder," said the exulting mother, as she looked up to the bright blue eyes, full of fun and fancy, and the broad, open brow, and dazzling teeth, of her heart's pride and darling.

"How beautiful his hair is!" she said,

when they were seated, passing her hands through the rich brown locks that fell on the collar of his coat:—" How do you think I am looking myself?"

"You,—oh, adorable! divine! as we say in Paris. If you were there, I dare say you'd make a conquest of Louis Philippe!"

"Nonsense! Now tell me how you think Aurelia looks?"

"Aurelia, Jessy, Lucy—you and I are all paragons of perfection! What beauties we all of us always were, always are, and always shall be! When once Burridge becomes a member of the family (if you're all as poor as I am), we'll have a caravan, and show ourselves about at fairs and races, as 'the family of unrivalled and unequalled beauties!' But come, I want some tea," continued Marcus; "be quick! I'm not accustomed to wait. Tell me all the news. Here, Jessy, come and sit by me, while Lucy makes the tea. Now, is it true that Dempster is going to marry the Tadpole?"

"Yes; and I really think it is all a manœuvre of Captain Delamere's, who has persuaded the imitative Dempster that he admires her, and keeps up his devotion by exciting his jealousy."

"Oh, well, I'll go and help him in that,—capital fun! I'm very glad poor Tadpole is to be provided for. She deserves some good luck for having so long supported her old mother and her little humped-backed sister! Oh, I'll go and make Dempster as jealous as an old wife."

With his rattle the wild and wilful Marcus kept the whole party up till very late; and then, having devised a thousand frolics against Burridge, the Tadpole, and the Eldertons, he at length allowed them to retire. Sir William was not come in, and Lady Vernon escaped the interview she dreaded. She went to bed almost happy, for she really loved her son.

Poor Marcus! he was just the being one cannot help loving; but in loving whom their is little comfort. He had great talents: but no patience, no perseverance, no foresight; the most trifling amusement led him away from the most important pursuit. He was reckless, daring, extravagant, witty, frolicksome, and fond of pleasure. Caution had been quite forgotten in his composition, and hope was his prominent organ. He ran in debt-somehow or other he was sure to be able to pay! He was very generous-but he forgot to be just first; brave to the extreme of rashness-he seemed never to have known what fear was-He always took the part of those who seemed to be the oppressed, without staying to inquire whether they were right or wrong-From earliest boyhood he had been Jessica champion against his mother's unkindness and he had been known, when quite a lad, engage in a boxing-match with a brutal cart whom he had seen half-killing a skelet horse. He had talents of the highest order he was a poet, a wit, and had a talent f drawing. His poetry was displayed in impromptu songs; his wit set his wild comp nions in a roar; and with his pencil he caricatured, and therefore offended, everybody who might have served him.

Sir William saw in him the representative of his family, and the future Earl of Rocksavage. He loved him as a father always loves a fine manly youth who does not rival him in anything; and liked him as a calm, selfish, worldly person likes a reckless, unsuspecting nature. All his paternal affection was centred in Marcus. And, thus beloved and spoiled by all at home, Marcus did what he pleased, went where he chose, rushed into a thousand wild extravagances, and filled every heart that loved him with a thousand ever-recurring fears and anxieties.

## CHAPTER X.

"Bab," said Elder, at breakfast, morning after Delamere's party, " better give me those five pounds to p with the seven pounds eleven."

"I am not at all of that opinion," s
"I am quite old enough to have the
of my own money; and really, Pris,
last three months, that no one but you
had a shilling, you have been so ove
that we have resolved to keep all we c
"Very well, young ladies" said Pri

your own board—pay your own bills. I shall only be a gainer. I shall be curious to see how long you will have anything in your pocket, Miss Bab: for my part, at Easter, I go to Mandeville Castle, and you must get on as well as you can by yourselves,—you can have nothing more on my credit then. I dare say, on my return, I shall find you all in jail."

Here Elder was interrupted. Sally, a dirty squinting maid of all-work, who waited on the Eldertons, Mrs. Gibbs, and all the lodgers, came in. "I've just been to the twopenny post, miss, to take a letter for missus; and the man give me this 'ere, directed to Miss P. E.; them's the letters you told me to ask for, 'aint 'em, miss?"

"Yes," said Bab, delighted, "here's sixpence; twopence for the postage, and fourpence for yourself, Sally."

Sally's squint brightened; "I'll go every morning, miss, to inquire for letters;" and she left the room.

Bab was going to open the letter, but Pris

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snatched it away. "Well, at least, Pris, read it aloud."

"The advertisement of this morning has attracted the attention of a gentleman, who is pleased with the independent spirit displayed in it, and the moderate emolument required. He is single, and rather middle-aged than young; but contemplating a change of condition, and the lady he is attached to having literary tastes, and moving in fashionable life, he wishes to have his own accomplishments a little modernised and renewed. He would be glad, then, if the terms are very moderate, to spend a few morning hours every day at the house of the advertisers. He has already considerable knowledg of French, singing, and dancing : but he wishe to brush up his conversation in the former, tlearn a few fashionable songs, and to be put the way of modern dances, such as quadrille= waltzes, &c.

"The gentleman is highly respectable, and depends on secrecy. If the terms suit he was beg for an interview, when names can be given

(in confidence) and all arrangements made. A line addressed to X. Y. Z., post-office, \_\_\_\_\_ street, will be immediately attended to.

"References given and required: but the object of the gentleman not to be divulged to the referee."

"Oh! what capital luck!" said Bab, "come, Pris, let us be friends. You can teach him, if you like, till you go to Mandeville Castle: let us write an answer at once—what shall we say?"

"No," said Pris, somewhat softened, "I will teach him French, you can teach him dancing, and Lavinia and Dolly take him by turns in singing—that will make it very light."

"Answer him at once, Bab: don't give our names, but appoint him to come here this evening. Ask a guinea a week for three hours a-day —we cannot say less."

- "He says, very low terms, Pris."
- "Well, and those are terms that no journeyman carpenter would be satisfied with."
- "And we are regular undertakers," said Bab, in high spirits.

"If you ask that, you'll lose him," said Dorothea; "say a pound a week."

"Do as I tell you, Bab!" cried Pris: "a guinea does not sound much more than a pound, but an extra shilling a week is an object to us—it would cover the sundries."

Bab asked a guinea a week, and appointed X. Y. Z. to an interview at seven o'clock that evening.

"It never rains but it pours," says an old proverb; and so said Bab, too, when Sally came in to tell her that Mr. Todd was below, and had requested to be allowed to see Miss Barbara Elderton.

"It's the same gentleman, miss, as give me the shilling to know your name, miss."

"What sort of gentleman is he, Sally?"

"Oh! he's a proper gentleman, miss, with a big ring on his finger and a watch to his side, and swaying about a beautiful stick: besides, miss, it's he as give me the shilling."

"Well," said Bab, almost beside herself,
"there's another for you. Show him up—say
I'll be down directly—that I'm in my chamber

at present; and Pris, dear, do you receive him; I must go and beautify a little—it may be of great importance to us all."

Bab hurried away, crimson with pride and joy.

The stranger was shewn in: he was a man about five-and-twenty, well dressed; not elegant, certainly, but the sisters decided that he had a wealthy look; and to the poor that is a greater charm than either beauty or grace. He had a very decided expression of countenance, and a resolute manner, which made Pris fancy that if he had set his heart on marrying Bab, no objections from parents or friends would deter him from the pursuit.

He took off a glove—there was the ring, certainly; but the hand was stumpy, and the nails not over clean.

Ah! thought Pris, he has something better to do than to prune his nails. She politely offered him a seat, and remarked, that "it was a fine day."

"Yes, ma'am, its quite ot for this season of the hear." Pris was rather shocked, but she said to herself, "Well, those who have known the misery of education and poverty would gladly compound for ignorance and wealth; besides, once married, Bab is a determined creature, and she will make him learn."

"It's Miss Barbara Helderton I wish to see, ma'am: the servant told me she was at 'ome."

"My sister is in her own apartment; I have sent her a summons to attend us."

A peculiar smile lighted the face of Mr. Todd.

"I am Miss Barbara's elder sister," said Pris: "perhaps you would like to speak to me in private; if so, these young ladies can withdraw."

"Oh! by no means; pray don't stir, young ladies:" the "young" was brought out with an effort and another smile.

Pris looked at them; they were in deshabille, and did certainly look rather old.

"Our dear Bab," she said, "is much the youngest of our family. You will not object to

my being present at your interview—size is very famile?

"I 'ope, ma'um, you'll make yourself quite at 'one; for though my business is with Miss Burbarer Helderton, I 'ope not to himosamode any one."

His business "thought all; he is some rich merchant's son, doubtiess. How close he is but that shows he is in love. Builty, he is good-looking—if he were but a little cleaner, and has good hair—if he kept it nicely.

At this moment Sally came in, with a most refulgent squint, and whispered something to Pris.

Pris rose: "Excuse me for one moment," she said, "I will return with Miss Barbara,"

Barbara's maiden modesty required her sister's support. In a few minutes the door was flung open. Barbara, her hair elaborately dressed, a little rouged, and tricked out in all the best things of all the Eldertons, came walking with downcast eyes: Mr. Todd hastened towards her. Had his passion made him mad? He did not drop upon one knee, or tremblingly offer his hand. The profane wretch seemed inclined to touch the sacred form of Barbara!

All the Eldertons looked aghast, for they were paragons of propriety.

"Good Heavens! sir," said Elder, placing her form of even statelier virtue between Mr. Todd and the blushing Bab: "do not forget yourself—remember whom you are addressing!"

Todd—was he insane?—passed his hand over Elder's shoulder—touched Barbara's arm unrolled a long paper (till then adroitly concealed in his dirty hand)—"I serve you with this 'ere writ in the Queen's name.—Good morning, young ladies!" then caught up his hat, and hastened from the scene.

"A bailiff!" shricked Elder; "A bailiff!" faintly murmured Bab; "A bailiff!" indignantly echoed Dorothea and Lavinia.

"Oh, what a vile, deceitful, beastly fellow!" said Elder.

"And yet," said Bab, bursting into tears, though he has done this he must be attached

to me! Perhaps he is reduced; he may have become a bailiff to obtain an interview."

"Don't be a fool, Bab!" said Elder, angrily;
"he has been a bailiff all along: he only wanted
to find out your name, because he couldn't
serve a writ without it."

"And I had quite forgotten the debt! I haven't had even a lawyer's letter about it lately," said Bab, examining the writ.

"At whose suit is it?"

"That vile pastry-cook's, Froth. You remember, when we lived in Charlotte Street, and gave a little soirée in hopes that Burridge would come with the Vernons, which, after all, the old bore didn't? Well, now, you see, with lawyer's letters and the writ, it has mounted up to five pounds."

"I had quite forgotten the debt," said Elder.

"Yes, debtors easily forget such things," said Bab, "but creditors never."

"Well, it's fortunate you have got the five pounds," said Elder. "I have nothing to do with it: you must all remember, young ladies, that I set my face against your having the soirée at all; particularly the extravagance of giving a supper."

"But we all lived for a fortnight on the remains—you among the rest," said Bab.

"Yes," retorted Elder, "and had a bilious fever from living on cheesecakes, macaroons, custards, and trifles. I'm not going to pay for your folly, Bab, I can tell you!"

Bab went into a fit, caused by disappointment about Todd, and rage against Pris; but she came safely out of it—the debt was paid—and Elder's prophecy verified, for poor Bab had not long kept the five pounds in her pocket.

As we have begun this important day with the Eldertons, perhaps we may as well finish it with them:—constant occupation at home, a few private lessons abroad, and long parleys with Mrs. Gibbs and Sally, fill up the time; and the reader must not mind for once having tea very early instead of dinner, particularly as he was with the Eldertons at so fine a repast yesterday. The Eldertons' advertisement, with its absurd misprint, had brought them several impertinent letters from idlers on the look out for fun, who evidently thought that young ladies of shrinking delicacy advertising for gentlemen pupils were no better than they should be. Elder tossed all these proofs of the villary of man into the fire with becoming scorn, and not without a remark that it was no wonder so many poor young creatures went astray, when such snares were laid by Satanic men for indigent virtue.

Bab thought Elder too precipitate. She fancied had some been written to, appointments made in which they might have been argued with and reproved, perhaps one or two might have been won back to the paths of virtue, and bound there for ever in the fetters of wedlock. But Elder was firm; besides, it was now too late; the letters with their addresses were all consumed. There was one, however, written in a different strain, which they resolved to answer. It ran thus:

recover lost time: for though a look so much older than I am, to ashamed of my own ignorance.

object with me, if I find mys. If you will inform me where I evening, at half-past seven, we of further arrangements. A line V. M. —— coffee-house, ——, we "Your obedies."

"This seems to be a good stealikely to pay well. Say we will Bab, at half-past seven; X. Y. Zhalf an hour."——So Bab appoint half-past seven.

The tea-things were hurried av

books in all languages. Dorothea sat down to an old spinnet, and Lavinia caught up the guitar.

X. Y. Z. had sent a note to say that he would be punctual, but objected to guineas—there were no such things now-a-days—he would agree to give a pound a week.

"Never mind," said Elder, "we will make V. M. pay for it. If he requires the three morning hours too, we must have them in a sort of class; they'll get on better, and it will be the sooner over. V. M. ought to pay three guineas a week."

Sally came smiling in with another letter.

"How vilely folded! What a wretched hand! What spelling!"

"Young ladies," said Pris, "perhaps it is to learn to write and spell better, that this young person applies to us—let us see.

## " HONORED MADDAMS!

"'Aving seen your notice in the Tims, and 'aving a great valy for larning and edication, I wishes to take a few lessons at the lowest pos-

sible terms. At schule I was kounted a good schollard; and, as you see, I writes and spells like one; but in Lunnun one must look charp to keep pase with the march of hintellect. As I am a great hadmirer of the nashunal drama, I think, with a little more larnin, I might be a fine hactor: but at present I aint nothing of the kind, but quite private and genteele; and as my haffections is placed on a very helegant 'ooman aboue me in hears, and situate in 'igh life, I'd wish to be able to sing and play a few hairs at parties where we meets, and to danse waltzes, quodreals, and the galloppeed. I'll have the 'oner to call, when I can slip out, at near nine this evening. I can't ficks regeller 'ours for my larning, butt if I'm low pay I'm shure pay: for I've a sartain hincum. I ham, 'onnored Maddams.

"Your umble survant,

"T. H."

"Well, poor fellow," said Elder, "it will be a charity to teach him, he must be respectable; ignorant as he is, you see, he has a certain income. A few stray half-crowns for idle evening hours will come in very well. I shall desire Sally to shew him up."

"I hope they won't all be here together," said Bab. "It is past seven, X.Y.Z. should be here."—A knock was heard—there was a delay of intense interest. Elder bent over a learned-looking tome, Bab put herself in a graceful attitude, Dolly and Lavy struck a few chords. Sally opened the door, a Macintosh and oil-skin hat were removed, and all the Eldertons shrieked—"Mr. Burridge!"

Burridge, whose spectacles the reader will remember the sweep had basely stolen, and who had not yet been able to persuade himself to buy another pair, purblind and puzzled, knew not what to say. He saw, as he thought, four fine elegant young women, and did not recognise the Eldertons (whose abode he did not know), till Pris, with admirable presence of mind, came forward.

" Mr. Burridge! in the unfortunate adver-

tisers, you recognise four young ladies whom you have only met hitherto in the haunts of fashion and pleasure. It were affectation now to make a secret of that poverty which the world in general does not suspect. (Poor-self-deceived Pris!) With your heart, and your mind, you cannot blame four daughters of an ancient family for keeping themselves, by their talents, above dependance, and thus escaping all the snares that assail unprotected virtue. Why not learn of us, dear sir?"

"Madam," said Burridge, wiping a moisture from his old green eye, "wiser than I am might learn of you; and—(here he made a grand effort)—so much do I respect you all, young ladies, that—that I'll pay the guinea instead of the pound a week!"

"Thank you, my dear sir. Young ladies, I am sure you are as pleased as I am, to recognise in our new pupil an old friend. References of course are out of the question now; and as one of my maxims is—

Take care of the minutes, those wandering elves.

The hours, my dear sir, will take care of themselves—

I propose that we dedicate a few to the ascertaining what you already know, and the laying a plan for your future studies. Will you take a seat by me—I think you wished to recover your knowledge of French?"

It will be seen that Elder was no fool, except when tormented by the insane ambition of being thought, with her sisters, young and fashionable beauties, courted and affluent. Their real circumstances once divulged, she laid aside much of her absurd pretension, and seldom, during the lesson, did she introduce poor dear Sir James, Lord Rivers, her poor dear papa, or one high sounding ancestor or ancestor's friends.

"My object," said Burridge, "is to be put in the way of introducing a few French words into conversation, dashingly, and with the modern accent; for French seems to me to be pronounced now very differently from what it was in my childhood. Then I wish to be able to take up a French book, and read a page or so, as it were off-hand, and, by and by, to sing a few French songs."

"Well, we can easily put you in the way of that. Will you read a passage in this book?"

"I haven't my spectacles, and I'm very short sighted."

"Just like poor"—but Elder checked herself—she offered a pair she kept, (in truth, when alone she constantly wore them,) "but," she said, "they had belonged to her poor dear papa, to whom" (it would come out) "they had been given by poor dear Lord Rivers."

"Ah!" growled Burridge, "but all these poor dears are only in the way just now. In renewing my education, my thoughts are rather with my probable progeny than my progenitors. I should like, if I have children, to see to their education myself—besides, it's a wonderful saving."

Elder looked rather prudish —" Will you read a little?"

Poor dear Dr. Elderton's spectacles suited very well. "Oh! that's Telemachus! that won't do—I want something new—something more impassioned—'Corinne,' or the 'Nouvelle Heloise.'

"I could not hear you read so immoral a work."

"Well, then, something new by Paul de Kock, or George Sand; I hear every one talking of their works."

"Sir," said Elder, "there are scenes in those works which no innocent and virtuous man should ever peruse, much less pollute therewith the chaste ear of maiden purity. I could not listen to you myself; how then could I suffer the younger daughters of the Rev. Dr. Elderton to be made acquainted with scenes of profligacy and vice?"

"Well, madam, you seem to have made yourself acquainted with them, at any rate!"

"Sir, I have been as a mother to those orphan girls; and I have cast my own abhorring eye over many works, in order that I might let the girls know whether they could read them with safety." "Well, to my mind, 'to the pure all things are pure;' I'm sure that is the case with me. If novels are to represent real life, vice must play her part in them, and I think an exposé of her wiles puts virtue on her guard: I am sure it has mine. I hear the two authors you are so prudish about are the best French novelists of the day. I hear them discussed everywhere; and I'm sure their works cannot be more free than 'Clarissa Harlowe,' 'Tom Jones,' and 'Peregrine Pickle.'"

"I request, sir, you will not name those works in the presence of the younger Miss Eldertons."

"Why, they are the glory of the language; an English woman should be ashamed to own that she has not read them."

"In my opinion, sir, an English man should blush to own that he has read them: but let us not waste time in disputing. Here is a work deservedly popular, and without one word or thought to bring a blush to the cheek of modesty;" and she put the beautiful tale of "Picciola" into Burridge's hand, and he bungled through a few lines.

"You have a very promising accent. You only want practice; take the book with you, and get up a page for me by to-morrow; and now just say in an off-hand manner, Je ne manquerai pas, mademoiselle."

"Ge ne monkura pau, madamsel!"

"Bravo!" said all the Eldertons. Burridge, flushed with success, repeated it several times.

"Now say, Adieu, belle demoiselle! au revoir!"

" Adieu, behl demwosel! au revoor!"

"Bravo! bravo!" cried all.

"Now," said Dolly, "you must come here, and let me try your voice."

"I've a good voice and a capital ear," said Burridge: "what I want is to learn a few new songs; such as 'I'd be a butterfly,' and 'I've been roaming,' and 'We met, 'twas in a crowd,' and 'Meet me by moonlight alone.'"

"Ah! I know all those, but they are not quite new."

"Those are what I want to learn, and a few duets,—'The last links are broken,' and others in that style."

"Well, just come here and run up the scale."

Burridge stalked to the spinnet, with the air of a connoisseur; he did not choose to say that he did not know what the scale was, but he knew he was cunning, and hoped to find out.

"Just run up the scale yourself, ma'am."

Dolly, with a voice like a peacock, ran up to the upper C.

Burridge's voice consisted of three very low bass notes, and one high one, like the squeak of an asthmatic bellows.

He exhibited his powers: the Eldertons applauded to the echo.

"What voice, now, do you call mine?" asked the entranced pupil.

"A very fine bass," said Dolly.

"Oh! but you have a treble, too," said La-

"You have a wonderful voice for a man," said Bab.

"Just like one of the 'Bohemian brothers,' " said Elder.

"Well, I'll just go through 'The soldier tired;' it requires great compass and execution."

And to his usual dirge, but occasionally introducing his applauded high note, Burridge went through the elaborate song of "The soldier tired."

Any soldier would have been tired before he had half done.

He ended amid a chorus of applauses; for the Eldertons were too old soldiers to shew their fatigue.

"Well, to-morrow," said Dolly, "you can begin 'I'd be a butterfly."

"I'd be a butterfly," began Burridge, all in his high note.

"But now," said Bab, "as it is getting late, let me see what you can do in the dancing line: if you have the same talent for that as you possess for music and singing, I shall be very proud of my pupil," The ready-handed Eldertons cleared away the tables and chairs. Burridge, anxious to exhibit, begged Dolly to play a hornpipe. The Eldertons were astounded at his agility and savoir faire.

"All I want is a few new steps, and to know the figures. Do you think Delamere, or Dempster, or Marcus, or any of them, could do what I've just done?"

"No, not if you'd pay them for it!" said Elder, who thought remuneration the greatest possible inducement to exertion.

"Now, then," said Bab (whose style of dancing was shewy and operatic), "you must learn a few pirouettes, battemens, and entrechats."

Burridge took out of his pocket a pair of pumps! "Do ye think I 've a good foot for dancing?" he said, extending a leg which might have served a Brobdignagian.

"Good!" said Bab; "it's an exquisite foot."

"Exquisite!" echoed all the Eldertons.

It was a curious thing, and one, dear reader,

which you will hardly believe, that though Burridge was so active, agile, and adroit at Scotch steps, reels, hornpipes, and all that he had learnt in his earlier youth, he was very slow, stiff, and clumsy in acquiring a pirouette, or the simplest quadrille figure. As for the waltz, nothing could be more awkward; twice he all but fell, and many times his 'exquisite' foot put Bab's to excruciating pain. The Eldertons had pushed him through a set of quadrilles; he had stood for some time à la zephyr! balancing himself, awkwardly enough, to assist in which he extended his arms and his tongue, and they were all so intent upon his progress, that they did not perceive the opening of the door. When, finishing the lesson with a tour de valse, Burridge turned giddy; he fell, dragging Bab with him, and, alas! their united weight coming suddenly against Elder and Dolly, they, too, were upset; when suddenly a gentleman, who had been standing for some time with Sally watching the lesson, darted forward, aided Bab to rise, and extricated the now wigless Burridge from beneath the superincumbent forms of Dolly and Elder."

"Mr. V. M." said Sally.

"Mr. Marcus Vernon!" shricked the Eldertons.

"Marcus Vernon? confound him!" growled Burridge, "what's he here for?"—And in his confusion he put on his wig the hind part before, which made all present burst into a fit of laughter.

"I am here by appointment," said Marcus.

"Mr. Burridge, I'm rejoiced to see you. Miss

Elderton, your servant; young ladies, your
most obedient."

"Stay, Marcus," said Burridge, "a word with you." They walked to the window. "The fact is, I 'm getting my accomplishments a little renewed against my marriage with Jessica; but, as I want to surprise her, and to be able to assist her in educating my family (if I should have any), I don't wish her to know of my taking lessons: so I trust to your honour, my dear

boy,—talents are never out of place, but people are apt to laugh when middle-aged men go to school again. I was going to call this evening in the square, to say you've got your cornetcy; and much good may it do you—but not a syllable of what you have seen!—have I your word?"

"You have! and a thousand thanks," said the volatile Marcus, now quite full of his cornetcy.

Miss Elderton came forward. "You wished to take some lessons of us, Mr. Marcus Vernon, when you did not know who we were: I hope you will not be deterred by recognising in us very old friends of your family; only, as we do not wish our poverty to be proclaimed where it would only awaken contempt, we must beg you to promise not to let even your own family know that we are reduced to give lessons."

Marcus, who had only answered the advertisement 'for fun,' caught by the 'young ladies' giving lessons to gentlemen, was too feeling to own he had meant only to amuse himself, and too generous to disappoint the evident expectations of the poor Eldertons, whose hard struggles against 'iron fortune' were not as unknown as they loved to believe; he therefore said, "Since writing to you, dear Miss Elderton, I find, that through Mr. Burridge's interest, I have obtained a cornetcy in the - dragoons. I shall be gazetted directly, and perhaps obliged to join my regiment: thus, you see, I shall scarcely have the time I had expected for my studies; but if you will allow me to take a lesson when I can, I will enter myself as your pupil at once. Allow me to pay this small sum," and he laid down a five pound note, "as entrance-money; I believe that is usual."

"It is usual, but we do not exact it."

Burridge, who did not want to hear anything of such an unexpected horror as "entrancemoney," turned away, humming "I'd be a butterfly."

Marcus insisted. "When I was a child, entrance-money was always paid for me. I am sure those who are kind enough to receive me now deserve it much better, as my entrance gives so much more trouble."

Elder put up the welcome note. "There is one thing I must explain," she said, "Mr. Burridge." At first Burridge would not hear; he muttered to himself, "Confound that extravagant dog! I hope he won't be the means of my having any cursed entrance-money to pay. It's a vile imposition, even at a regular school."

But Bab approached him with a pas de zephyr. "Don't you hear Pris wants to speak to you?" And taking his arm, she led him up to Pris.

"What I wished to say," said Pris, "concerns my own character, and that of these young ladies!—I allude to our equivocal-looking advertisement, which was a mere misprint, as we had written 'female sex.' I know, Mr. Burridge, you applauded it; but the daughters of the late Rev. Dr. Elderton would rather be praised for the most scrupulous decorum than

for the most independent spirit; it is a praise much better suited to unprotected virtue. As it has chanced, we see no objection to the gentlemen pupils who have offered; for, as Mr. Burridge said, 'to the pure all things are pure;' but we depend on secrecy, for many who welcome us now would look coldly on us if they knew we turned our talents to account to save us from dependence."

"I should like to have the thrashing of such noodles," said Marcus.

"Confound 'em all !" growled Burridge, " so should I."

Here the door was flung open, and Mr. T. M. announced. The light shone full on a strange figure — tall, pompous, and all his clothes a world too wide. Burridge, by the aid of Elder's spectacles, recognised Tim, and his own green velvet waistcoat.

All exclaimed "Tim ! !"

"Yes, gentlemen and ladies,—Tim!"said the butler, nothing daunted, but buttoning up his coat to hide his waistcoat. "You impudent scoundrel! what are you here for?" said Burridge.

"For larnin—for hedication—for what has often ris the poor man above is hignorant hoppressor!" said Tim, very indignant.

"Get out, sir, or I'll kick ye out!"

"Will ye, tho', measter? You'll see as two can play at that game! I'm here by appointment, to be hedicated for the nashunal dramer. When you marries and has a family, as you proposes, I don't mean, as you hopes, to bemean myself to be a nuss; I means, by my own henergies, to become a hactor. All I want is hedication, now, as the 'Weekly Dispatch' says, the birthright of every Briton."

"But, Tim, when we appointed you, we had no idea you were a servant," said Elder.

"My shillun is as good, and more sartain, than many a rich man's."

"He said he had a regular income," said Bab to Burridge.

"Hollo! you scoundrel! what did you mean by saying you had a regular income?" "What did I mean? why, my wages. And if I haven't a regular income, it'll be the more shame for you, that's all, sur."

"Well, now, go home, Tim," said Burridge, who did not want to lose his services: "the ladies can't teach you, you know."

"I'm a going—I'm a going; but, thank heaven, the time's a coming when there 'll be no servants and no masters, and no harristocraks but the harristocrak of hintellect! for all men is hequals, according to the law of natur and immutable justis, both he as works and he as sits at home hidle, a runnin of him down. One day, them as is servants now will be ris to be masters; but in this great metrotolis there's many a hacademy where my shillun'll be thought as good as a lord's—and so I humbly axes all your pardons."

Thus saying, the ambitious butler twitched his forelock, bowed, and departed.

Burridge and Marcus then took their leave, the former to attend at the Eldertons daily with the greatest punctuality, the latter to reobstinate, disputatious pupil: he always thought his own way the best;—would never own himself in the wrong;—sung all the new songs to his own dirge;—introduced Scotch and Irish steps into the quadrilles and galops;—generally came before and stayed after his time, and convinced the Eldertons that the fitting an obstinate old bear to shine in fashionable circles, and aspire to the hand of a young beauty, was a dear bargain at a guinea a week.

## CHAPTER XI.

"I cannor imagine, Jessica," said Marcus to her one morning, "what induces you to disfigure yourself by wearing that gaudy, hideous, flaring yellow shawl! In the Gardens yesterday every one was quizzing you; and Osmond Delamere, who, Lucy tells me, was in love with you at his own party, was entirely devoted to Aurelia."

"That was very natural, as Aurelia looked so handsome, and was so becomingly dressed, and I, as you observe, looked quite a fright."

"But what on earth do you do it for? It hides your figure, spoils your face, and, added to all that, makes you seem a monument of bad taste." "I never do wear it when I can help it, and only when Burridge, who gave it to me, would be offended if I did not. Yesterday, for instance, my uncle begged me to wear it, as Burridge had spoken to him about the ——ship, and it is necessary to keep him in a good humour. You would not have got your cornetcy, Marcus," she added, smiling, "if I had made him sulky by refusing to appear in his shawl."

"Dear Jessy, what a sacrifice you are made to all of us! However, be on your guard, child, or one day, to keep him in a good humour, you will have to wear the name of Mrs. Burridge. It's coming to that, I can see—Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Burridge, and the little Burridges!"

"Oh, Marcus! as if he was such a fool as to think of such a thing."

"He'd be a much greater fool if he didn't think of such a thing. However, let him fancy what he likes, you cannot be married unless you fancy it too. But what uninventive creatures all of you are! why, I would have got rid of that shawl ages ago without offending him—leave it to me."

"But, dear Marcus, you do not think Burridge fancies I like him?"

"Like him? he fancies you are engaged to him. He already talks of his wife and family." Jessica burst into tears.

"Jessy, my darling girl! nonsense! what does it matter what he thinks? you are not answerable for the vagaries of a vain old baboon; and, as to having him, though I'm not at all suited to you, child, and love you much more as a brother than a lover, yet I'd rather run away with you myself! Don't fret, dearest Jessy!" and in the energy of his consolation he threw his arm round Jessy and kissed away her tears, as a brother would a favourite sister's.

At that moment the door opened, and Captain Delamere entered. He was pale, but he grew paler on perceiving that he had intruded on what seemed a tender tête-à-tête, on remarking Jessica's tears and embarrassment, and Marcus's laugh and blush.

"I have been making Jessy cry, by telling her Burridge fancies she is in love with him," said Marcus, kindly noticing Jessica's look of despair.

"Miss Thornton, I should think, would only laugh at hopes she raises but to overthrow," said Delamere, with a bitter smile.

"I should be more inclined to laugh at a taunt I do not deserve," said Jessica, with spirit, but her eyes filling with new tears. "Man's vanity much more frequently than woman's coquetry is the architect of false hopes. But I do not believe Mr. Burridge so weak as to fancy encouragement where none was ever given."

She means that for me, thought Delamere: all Lady Vernon said is true, all Mrs. Winter implied just,—and I believed her so modest, so simple a creature!—I could have sworn she loved me, and here she has only been amusing herself till Marcus returned, and now I am laughed at, Burridge jilted, and, I suppose, ere long, she will elope with her fine cousin! What a fool I have been! If I had not called to-day I might have been deceived into proposing, for I began to feel that, all un-

known and destitute as she is, I should have been prouder of her as my wife than of any high-born beauty, with the world at her feet!—And Aurelia, that marvel of genius and loveliness! beautiful being! she cannot hide the charms of her surpassing face and form! but the treasures of her mind, and the devotion of her heart, she would fain hide,—in vain! Chance has revealed them, and shall I not bless that chance?—so modest! so shrinking! and yet so gifted, so devoted!

Thus thought Delamere, while Marcus was engaged in tying knots in his horsewhip and in examining his boot, and Jessica in sewing on the buttons which had just come off his gloves.

He occasionally enlivened them with a scrap of a song, a remark on the dulness of London compared to Paris, on their silence, and his own knowledge in boots, gloves, whips, &c.

Delamere asked for Lady Vernon and Aurelia; he heard they were out: "Will they be at the concert this evening?" He did not ask whether Jessica would be there.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Yes, they are going, I believe."

"In that case I shall go: pray tell them, it seems an age to me since I saw them last!" He had seen them two days before. He coldly offered his hand to Jessica, who as coldly touched his. "Let us ride together," he said to Marcus; and, more dispirited and humbled at heart than he had ever felt before, but looking more than usually elate and proud, he left poor Jessica to a severe struggle between pride and grief.

The truth was, on the evening of his dinner party, he was no sooner alone than he hastened to his boudoir with Lady Vernon's album. She had said it contained some early effusions of Jessica's and her girls,—but he only thought of Jessica; the little song she had composed evinced poetical feeling, the discussion they had had together both taste and reading of no common order. Oh! if that critique were hers! What a flood of joy rushed over his heart at the idea! And Aurelia knew it perhaps, and thence arose her confusion! A bunch of violets lay on his table—one poor Jessica had forgotten: he recognised and pressed them to

his lips, then closed his door, stirred his fire, threw himself into his arm-chair, and prepared for the luxury of possessing himself of Jessica's first thoughts of love and dreams of poetry, of wandering amid a wilderness of sweets.

The book at first seemed to contain nothing but extracts from different poets, mostly copied by Lucy and Jessica; presently he came to some loose leaves-his own name and that of Inez (his poetical heroine) struck him, the colour rushed to his temples—the hand he knew to be Aurelia's-it was evidently the rough copy of the review of his poem, for there were many erasures and corrections. A card fell from the book, it was one of his own, on which he had written a few words in pencil,some violets, dry, but still fragrant, were enclosed in a paper, and a date written in pencil. Delamere recalled a day on which he had presented some violets of his own rearing to the Vernons and Jessica. He turned to the beginning of the book, "Aurelia Vernon" was written in the same hand with the rough copy of the review. Aurelia! the beautiful, the

silent! she who never hazarded an opinion! she who never expressed a sentiment! she whom in his heart he had accused of coldness, insipidity, almost of dulness; yet whose eloquent eyes, and more eloquent blushes, denied the charge! Could such a rare union of genius, beauty, passion and modesty, indeed exist, and exist for him, and he be indifferent to it? Why is he not proud and joyous? Why is his chief feeling one of deep, deep regret? Why, as he closes the book, does he say, "Oh, that it had been Jessica Thornton!" What was the poor protegée, unknown, of doubtful, perhaps dishonourable birth, compared to the splendid Aurelia, with all the advantages of good family, matchless beauty, rare genius, and, above all, a heart full of fervent, hoarded, hidden treasures for him!

"Who can school the heart's affection?
Who can banish its regret?

If you blame my deep dejection,
Teach, oh teach me to forget!"

So said Delamere to himself, as, spite of this discovery, he kissed Jessy's bouquet again and again, and retired, to dream, alternately, of the beauty and the *protegée*.

## CHAPTER XII.

The next morning, before Delamere was up, came a note from Lady Vernon, saying that in mistake she had given him Aurelia's scrapbook, which was exactly like her own,—and, as Aurelia was very uneasy on finding hers missing, (she could not tell why,) since albums were generally open to the world, she begged him to return it by the bearer, and, if he could, to quiet Aurelia, by saying he had not opened it: she sent her own (one bound exactly like it), and begged for his promised contribution.

Delamere returned the book, with his com-

pliments, and a message, " that he was not up, but that all was right."

This equivocal message convinced our plotters that he had seen all they wished him to see, and was in doubt how to act.

"I'm sure I don't care how it turns out," said Aurelia; "Lord Stare has been driving up and down in such a love of a cab, for more than an hour, and at Delamere's party he was quite taken up with Jessica."

"I care more about it than ever," replied the mamma: "in the first place, I cannot bear the idea of Jessica, by her cunning manœuvres, cheating you out of an excellent match; in the next, I remarked little Egbert well, and I am sure he is consumptive; and, lastly, the countess tells me Lord Stare is terribly indebted, and must marry a woman with money."

"Oh, I dare say he has enough to live upon in style abroad, and he would not mind my waltzing and being admired, and all that; and Delamere is so particular, and I'm so afraid of him; and he seems to look down upon me."

"Ah! but when he thinks you wrote that critique, he will look up to you,—such praise of his poem will convince him that you have wonderful taste and discernment; but, above all, I long to see that little artful Jessica outwitted. Did you see the cross and crescent of brilliants which your father gave her to-day? And here to me, who brought him a splendid fortune, he never makes the slightest present!"

"I wonder whether that little teasing Egbert will die?" said the beauty: "I think he is very strong; and, if he lives, Delamere will never have a title."

"And if he has not, child, it would be better to be Mrs. Delamere, living in good style, than Lady Stare, perhaps eating off British plate, and burning marguerite candles!"

"Oh, la! no—we should never do that: if we had not plate, we could hire it."

" Not without money, child; so don't be

a fool! I believe, now, Delamere will propose."

"Oh! what a dull husband he will be, with his books and his music, and painting. I declare, he wo'n't be much better than Lucy's beau, except that it is better to be a captain in the guards than a clergyman in the country!"

"I think Mr. Seymour an excellent match for Lucy, so don't try to set her against him: he requires no fortune, and I'm sure I never expected her to get off at all; and now, if you don't take care, she will be married first."

"Yes, but what a stupid match!"

"Mind you make a better—remember you are two years older than Lucy."

"Marvel Brown and Lord Stare say I look younger than she does."

"Folly! don't think of those detrimentals!

And now come and walk. Burridge and

Delamere are below."

"Oh, la!" said Aurelia, "then Jessica must wear her yellow shawl, and we will go to the Zoological Gardens; and I will wear my new mode!"

That was the walk to which Marcus had alluded. Burridge engrossed Jessica; and Delamere, thus obliged to walk with Aurelia, tried to draw out some of the supposed treasures of her mind; but she knew that silence and reserve were her strong holds, and she let her eyes, smiles, and blushes speak for her.

Delamere was evidently absent, unhappy, depressed: on his return, he found a letter from Mrs. Winter: that lady, in the character of a friend, ventured to tell him, that she had quite altered her opinion of Aurelia Vernon, whose reserve she had discovered to proceed from anything but want of heart and intellect.

"The friendship which has usurped the place of the love I once felt for you, Osmond," she said, "has made me clear sighted: I can contemplate, now, your union with another! I can contemplate it with joy—when

I fancy I have discovered in that other a mind and heart worthy of you !- You are beset by many snares, Osmond. There is one, specious, engaging, plotting, and whose sad and dependent situation would be rather a claim upon a heart like yours! She knows it; and she is aware that her cousin, who has been as a sister to her, adores you! She, I have found,-but I mention it in strict confidence,-she, calculating on the death of that child you so love, has vowed to be the future Countess of Mandeville !- Loving you with the sisterly devotion I now feel for you, Osmond-I have resolved to put you on your guard: I wish you now married to one whom, in my former wild delusion. I hated as a rival. I have toiled to discover Jessica's real views and character-at first with the hope that, as I saw she pleased, she might prove worthy of you: I learn she was long attached to her cousin, or rather long endeavouring to persuade him that she was soand still, if you escape her, she has an eye to him. But that she may not fail to secure some one,

she allows old Burridge to fancy himself engaged to her, borrows large sums of him, corresponds with him, and accepts his presents; and so blind is he that he is actually (but this is a very great secret) learning French, music, and dancing of the Eldertons, to shine before her in married life, and, as he himself proclaims, to assist her in educating their future family. A little observation will convince you, Osmond-as it did, alas! myself-of Jessica's understanding with her cousin; and I doubt not, if you asked Burridge frankly, but privately, you might get at the truth as to his engagement. Had you not better, then, friend of my soul! propose at once to a lovely girl who adores you, than become the dupe of a wily adventuress ?- Oh! may your fate be all I wish it! And when it is so, may you trace it in some degree to the watchful, unforgetting, patient spirit of

" EVELEEN WINTER."

Oh! what a miserable, degrading, heartsickening suspicion is that—that you have been deceived in the being you loved-loved perhaps in secret: but secret, unavowed, devouring love, is the most fascinating to the soul!- Jessica, a wily, interested coquette! Her apparent simplicity, hidden art, and the preference for him which he had fancied bebetraying itself in spite of the sweet reserve of her nature, in reality assumed for motives of worldly advancement !- Oh! could it be? He pondered, with a sense almost of degradation on the contents of Mrs. Winter's letter; for when the object of our silent worship proves unworthy, we are ashamed of our past devotion at the shrine-ashamed that we have ever knelt in thought even to an idol of clay. And we cannot rest; and the path that we once trod as pilgrims, zealous and fond, we retreat from as accusers-as avengers! But it is all vain! We may pile up with thorns and poison-flowers the altar we once fed with the first-offerings of the affections, the incense of the soul, the libation of the heart's best blood; but the dove

of peace descends not into our own breasts the while. Revenge on the object of our choice may be a momentary cordial, but faith in it is the staff of life.

It was, then, after the receipt of Mrs. Winter's letter, that Delamere, humbled and disappointed, though believing Aurelia perfection, and himself beloved by her, resolved to see Burridge, and to call on Jessica.

As Burridge was not at home, he repaired to the Eldertons, in the New Road, where, from Mrs. Winter's letter, he hoped to find him. When a double knock was heard, a succession of heads, namely, those of Burridge and all the Eldertons, were put out of the second-floor window; and then Sally came down, in great haste, to say "that no one was at home." Dealamere, his heart on fire with impatience, gave Sally half-a-crown, and said,

"Is Mr. Burridge, here? I want to see him particularly: try to manage it, my good girl,

—I'll wait here."

Sally, won by the half-crown, and so kind a smile from such a beautiful gentleman, said, "she would go and see;" and muttered to herself, as she put the half-crown in her pocket, "Well, to think of them old ladies—for they aint nothing, nothing else—having such a sight of loviers as I never seed! Why, that 'ere young lord is as hanxious and jealous of that 'ere old Burridge as ever was, and all in a tremble like. I 'spose it's all hedication as does it, for the're as or'nary wimen as you'll meet in a summer's day."

So saying, she reascended the stairs. The party on the second floor, fancying the intruder gone, returned to their pursuits, and "I'd be a butterfly," all in one note, of a squeaking penetrating falsetto, came down the stairs, and convinced Delamere that Burridge was above.

However, nothing could be done. Sally hastened down to repeat her assurance, and Delamere resolved to call on him at home, as he could not catch him at school. In the meantime, he paid that visit in Berkeley square, the result of which the reader is acquainted with.

In the evening the Vernons, Jessica, and Burridge went to the concert—the latter to cultivate his ear and taste; indeed Bab, that she might point out what was best worthy of his notice and imitation, had got him to give tickets to herself and Elder, and to take them with him in a hackney coach. There was a mystery, an increased pomposity, an intense self-importance, and a scornful disparagement of the accomplishments of all other aspirants (male and female) about Burridge, which arose partly from a mistaken notion of his own improvement, partly from the constant and deluding flattery of all the Eldertons. If any one (even Jessica) played, he shook his head-"Ah! she wants aplomb expression—the je ne sais quoi:" if any one sang, it was out of tune, crude, harsh-no tone, no breadth, no science. The cant of criticism now pervaded his whole discourse: but as yet he made no display of his

own new acquirements; and even Jessica was little courted till he could come forth, quite finished, from the hands of all the Eldertons.

At the concert he kept himself very much to Bab and Elder, beating what he fancied was time, straining his attention to catch a grace, an air, shutting his eyes and shaking his head.

The Eldertons looked very triumphant when they met in the cloak-room, each with the arm of a beau, (one beau—but then he had two arms,) while Jessica, Aurelia, and Lady Vernon, generally so beset, had only Marcus and Delamere, Edward Seymour being engrossed by Lucy.

"That last singer has great science and compass, and tone, and breadth," said Burridge; "her last roulade was full of tone."

The Vernons looked surprised.

"Why, what do you know about it?" asked Lady Vernon, archly.

"Know? why, more, perhaps, than any one present, except the Miss Eldertons. Can your ladyship tell me in what key it was set?"

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- " No, not I."
- " Can you, Miss Jessica?"
  - " No, indeed."
- " Nor you, Aurelia?"
- " I! oh! no-I did not attend to it."
- "Well, then, it was in the key of E major, four sharps. Now, who is the connoisseur amongst us?"
- "Oh! Mr. Burridge is decidedly a very great connoisseur," said Bab.
- "Just like poor dear Lord Rivers, who dedicated a cavatina to Dr. Arne—didn't he, Bab! no, no, Dr. Arne dedicated one to him: that was in four sharps, I believe."

Here Marcus interrupted the connoisseurs.

"Jessica, I have been looking every where, and
I cannot find your shawl."

"Not your yellow shawl?" said Burridge, forgetting his assumed character in his real anxiety.

"Yes; it was in my yellow shaw! I came."

" How could you come to a concert in that

expensive, elegant thing? Of course some sharper of rank has set her heart on it, and carried it off! What is to be done?" and Burriege all but cried. Then, rudely shaking off the Eldertons, he went himself to rummage among the piles of cloaks and shawls, to quarrel with the women in waiting, and to threaten them with the police. At length, some one having suggested that it had been taken in a mistake, and might yet be returned, he then, still furious, tugged hold of the Eldertons, and, without wishing the Vernons or Jessica goodnight, dragged them to the hackney-coach, muttering about "Extravagance-carelessnessa shawl that would last a woman her life, and her daughters after her !" and the improbability that any harpy who had once got hold of it would ever give it up.

Meanwhile, Delamere offered his cloak; so stifly, however, that Jessica could not accept it: but with a tippet of Lucy's, and a boa of Marcus's, defended herself from the outward cold, while, alas! all the silks of Thibet

and all the furs of Siberia could not have protected her heart from the deadly inward chill that stole over it, when she marked the formality of Delamere's manner to her, as he offered his arm to the beautiful Aurelia.

"Capital! capital!" whispered Marcus to Jessica, as he saw Burridge draw back into the hackney-coach a head he had put out to swear at a waterman who asked for a penny—"Capital!"—and he gave way to a long laugh.

"What are you laughing at, Marcus?"

"Bravo! why, you are taken in, too! excellent! I am the old harpy—the fashionable swindler—who has made away with the shawl; and I don't think it ever will come back."

"You, Marcus?"

"Yes, I, Jessica! just after you took the hideous, flaring thing off, I opened a window in the cloak-room, and while the women were attending to another party, dropped it into the street. Thank heaven! I shall never see you in it again,"

" Oh, Marcus!"

"Oh, Jessica! Why, you little ungrateful puss! I do believe you liked it, after all."

"No, I hated it: but it was very extravagant to throw it away."

"Extravagant, why it would have perhaps cut you out of a fine income,—have prevented your ever getting married, Jessy! Who would have such a gaudy frump? Well, I watched it; it was picked up by a tidy looking woman, who seemed suddenly to go wild with joy; I saw her take it to a lamp, put it on, toss her head,—strut off in it; and that I hope is the last I shall ever see of your yellow shaw! Now, are you not obliged to me? if you had had one spark of spirit, you would have done it yourself long ago! You must be glad to get rid of it."

"Yes, but poor Burridge!"

"Ah! yes, he thinks himself so much the poorer, of course, as he fancies he is now minus the shawl of his future wife, and that of the Miss Burridges who were to have sported it after your demise."

Jessica laughed; she looked up, and met the searching glance of Osmond Delamere; he had heard the whole conversation, though Aurelia's white and graceful hand was on his arm, and her bright blue eyes raised to his, while a soft smile showed her brilliant teeth,—yet he had not lost a syllable of Jessica's and Marcus's conference. He could not suppress a laugh at the boyish manœuvre of the latter, even while he hated him for presuming to touch Jessy's shawl, and fancied he despised her for laughing at his doing so.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Delamere, under pretence of indisposition, shut himself up in his own house all the day after the concert. In vain did Lady Mandeville send to beg to see him, as she felt decidedly worse; in vain did Egbert come with his bonne, and beg admittance at his chamber door; in vain did Marvel Brown call to read him a new impromptu, and Dempster to consult him on his wedding waistcoat—he would see no one! He sent no answer to another earnest exhortation from Mrs. Winter to be on his guard against Jessica, and to consider whether his attentions might not have compromised Aurelia. He hated all the world, and so he re-

mained "feeding on poisons" (for what else are doubt, suspicion, and resentment?) till the winter sun was gone to his early bed, and the lamps were lighted, and it was evening. Then, seizing his ample cloak, and wishing that with it he could exclude for ever the false world, and hide himself from every eye, he hastened to Burridge's lodgings—the street door was open, for a maid was bargaining for "a last dying speech and confession," and having heard from her that Burridge was at home, Delamere hastily ascended the stairs.

There was a noise as of people in violent movement, but Delamere's knock was unheeded: a little patience convinced him that Burridge was practising his dancing, and that with Tim, who was glad to get (in however subordinate a capacity) a few windfalls from the tree of knowledge, and who, if the truth must be told, could already galop, waltz, and pirouette far better than Burridge, though Burridge spent hours, as Tim said, at the "fountain ead of hedication," (namely, the El-

dertons,) and Tim had no model but Burridge himself, when, in order to practise, he called upon Tim to act as lady in a waltz or galop.—
Tim, too, had caught up a few French words from hearing Burridge repeat his lessons, and could in reality beat him all to nothing in "I'd be a butterfly," which he had often heard sung by Flounce, and by a set of ragged dirty wretches in the street, who seemed to have a good chance of becoming butterflies, since they were already grubs; but Tim had tact, and concealed the sheaves he privately gleaned from the fields of science.

At length the waltz ceased, and Delamere's knock was heard, "Go, Tim, and say I'm not at home," cried Burridge.

Delamere, hearing this, and determined not to be foiled again, opened the door. Burridge, his wig off, his red pocket handerchief tied under his chin, in a flannel jacket and pumps, was standing with one hand touching the wall, practising a succession of Bab's dashing plies, battemens, and pirouettes; while he squeaked out (not to lose time) "I'd be a butterfly!"

"So it seems," said Delamere, laughing.

Burridge, who, not having on his spectacles, at first mistook him for Tim, no sooner perceived his error than he darted into his bedroom, caught up his wig and Macintosh (the only garment at hand), and returned with great dignity to do the honors of his house.

But if he was a ludicrous figure before, he was still more so now. The praises of the Eldertons were not confined to Burridge's mind, his person came in for a share, and in order to feel himself worthy of the admiration they more than implied, Macbotcher was frequently called into counsel, and Tim nightly oiled the old snuff-coloured wig, and made it a very porcupine of papillotes. It was in this state when Burridge caught it up, and in his hurry placed it on one side of his head. This curious head-dress, added to the immense Macintosh, and the pompous air which Burridge as-

sumed, convulsed even the well-bred Delamere with suppressed laughter.

"May I know the cause of this visit?" said Burridge, his *papillotes* quivering with importance.

"I wish to speak to you in private, Mr. Burridge," said Delamere; his gaiety vanishing as he remembered the cause of his visit.

"Then, Tim, go, and take these and a paste pot, and let me see your skill to-morrow, in finding you have stuck a bill wherever one could be posted; and ask Mr. Tweedle to lend me the Courier, that I may see whether the advertisement is in."

Burridge handed Tim a bundle of thin papers—one escaped, and fluttering close to Delamere, he picked it up.

"Read it," said Burridge, "it is my composition: read it aloud—I like to hear it."

Delamere read:—"Lost last night, between the hours of eight and ten, a large yellow shawl, of no use to any but the owner.—["A good hit to say that, you see, sir."]—Any one who has found it, will do well not to wear it, as, having belonged to an invalid, it may be infected.—
["You see that ruse, sir?"] If brought to the house of Frost, Confectioner, —— Street, the finder will be handsomely rewarded, as the shawl, though of no value, was a keepsake. No further reward will be offered."

"Well, what do you think of that?—and that will be in all the papers to-morrow! You see I have not said what reward—so I can give a shilling when once I've got the shawl back, and that's more than the thief who carried it off deserves. Then, too, you see, I've made it out of no value, and set people against it: Miss Bab Elderton suggested that." Delamere had thought there was a littleness of short-sighted cunning in the whole thing, not quite in keeping with Burridge's character; but he praised its originality, and remarked that it would cost him several pounds to advertise it in all the papers.

"Yes," said Burridge; "but poor Jess! she'll break her heart if it never comes back.

You should have seen her when she found it was gone,—she seemed turned to stone!" Delamere had seen her, but had only remarked a smile of pleasurable surprise. Still he could gladly have knocked old Burridge down for the tone in which he spoke, and for his calling her "Jess!"

"Besides," said Burridge, "it is pleasant to see oneself in print. Miss Bab Elderton, and, indeed, all the Eldertons,—very fine and clever young women!—say it's quite a new sort of advertisement; quite an era in advertising. I cannot afford to buy all the papers; but the Vernons take some, and so do you: I wish you would send Jess any that have it in. Poor little Jess! I dare say she is breaking her silly little heart."

"Oh, you odious, infuriating old fool!" said Delamere to himself, as he restrained his hand, to prevent knocking off Burridge's papilloted wig.

"I gave thirty guineas for that shawl," said Burridge: "as Bab Elderton said, it was capital to make it out of no value; if I had said what it was worth, I should have had no chance of recovering it: it would last Jess her life, and her daughters after her. I hope, though, she is not careless; a careless woman soon ruins a family."

"I came here, sir," said Delamere, pale, and trembling with passion, "to speak to you in confidence about Miss Thornton."

"What, Jess? oh, speak out, depend on my honour!"

"Sir, is there anything in the report that you are paying your addresses—are engaged to Miss Thornton?"

"Yes, sir, there is—what there seldom is in any report—truth."

"Good God!" said Delamere, and he started up. Burridge, who was seated on a small, steep, straight-backed, Astley-Cooper chair, which the Eldertons had lent him, for his figure, lost his balance, and fell. While he rose, Delamere, recovering his self-possession, re-seated himself, and said, "May I ask you, sir, on what you found your pretensions?"

"Sir, I am no boy!" said Burridge, grasping a dumb-bell that lay near him: "I do not fancy every woman that smiles at me, and squeezes my hand, is in love with me, as younger men do"-(here Delamere recognised the Eldertons, who had probably described him as this coxcomb, with regard to women)-" I go on sure grounds. I have my share of oeillades, petit soins, verses, and anonymous letters-(he had lately had some, which any one else would have detected, so faint was even the attempt at disguise-they came from Bab Elderton)-but that is all nothing. In the first place, I believe that if a man of tolerable person, middle-age, which is the age young girls prefer, and accomplished education, really sets his heart on a woman, he never fails to win her; particularly if she is living in miserable dependence, and unkindly treated, and he offers her love's marriage and a comfortable home. I have not yet fixed the day, but Jess and I quite understand each other."

"Forgive me!" said Delamere, gasping for patience: "I own to you in confidence I had intended proposing to Miss Thornton,—that alone entitles me to question you thus closely; that will perhaps excuse me if I trespass on your confidence, in a manner I could not otherwise presume to do."

"My dear fellow," said poor old Burridge, much affected, and wiping his eye with the corner of the Macintosh, his red pocket-handkerchief being still in his bed-room, "I revere you for the generous unworldliness of your views towards my poor Jess. A young man, with some advantages of person, and many of station and wealth, who makes up his mind to propose to a friendless, penniless girl, of doubtful birth, is, like myself, capable of disinterested, ennobling passion. Sir, I respect you! I am not a man to crow over an unsuccessful rival; I feel for you, and if the world had another Jessy, I should wish her yours; but I have long thought there is but one on earth, and I cannot regret that that one is mine; for as the author of Picciola observes"-(here he took up the book with assumed carelessness, and read

off fluently enough a few sentences, well conned with the Eldertons, and which had not much to do with the question they were discussing).

Delamere resolved to endure on, till he had gained the information which was to be to him as a decree of destiny.

"As you have not yet fixed the day, Mr. Burridge, and it seems there is not a formal engagement between you, will you forgive me if I ask upon what you found your pretensions to Miss Thornton's hand?"

"Sir, I am no coxcomb! I do not conclude a girl loves me, without ample cause;" and Burridge replaced his wig, which was shaking with wrath. "Jess hates coxcombs; and, to tell you the truth, you would have had a better chance had you been less of a coxcomb; but no girl who liked coxcombs would ever have set her heart on me! But to the point: in all candour and confidence, and to spare you, by one (perhaps) cruel blow, much after-misery, I will be circumstantial. Jess permits me to allude by word and letter to our future union; she

corresponds with me; implies that she likes to see me alone; accepts my presents; and lately, having got, I suppose, into some difficulty, she privately borrowed a hundred pounds of me, which, however, she promised to save me in future times—of course, by her economy as my wife."

"Enough, sir," said Delamere, rising; "I am convinced."

"I shall not come formally forward till I have mastered a few fashionable accomplishments, which will make wedded life, in the total retirement in which I mean to live, more sweet to Jess, and enable me to save considerably in the education of a family. I do not think it fair all the trouble in that way should fall on a poor young creature whose health will, of course, often be too delicate for the exertion; and I trust she will share my horror of needless expense, and rejoice to see me supplying the place of governesses, tutors, and masters, who are all so many domestic cormorants, eating one out of house and home, and requiring to be paid for doing so."

"Good morning, Mr. Burridge—good evening, I mean. I depend on secrecy."

"Stop, my dear Delamere, you look ill; can I offer you anything—a little music?" and he took up Bab's MS. copy of "I'd be a butterfly," and began to squeak it out.

"Thank you—my mind is not tuned to such 'a concord of sweet sounds.'"

"Would you like to hear the first three pages of Picciola? they are very fine and soothing."

"Not now, I thank you."

"Well, then, 'drive dull care away,' and take a turn with me in a waltz, or galop;—you must act as the lady, though."

"Thank you, I do not feel inclined to dance."

"Perhaps it might please you to see me go through my exercises? they are very healthy, and you could try them at home."

"Another day, if you please; I am pressed for time now. Farewell! do not mention our interview to any one, and spare me all future allusion to it."

"Sir, I am not a man to kick the dead lion; it would be no pleasure to me to do so."

"Perhaps, like me, you would rather kick the living donkey. Good night," and he hastened away; and as he pondered on Burridge's credulous folly, he thought, like a celebrated modern writer, that at an advanced age, "Il faut être en garde contre l'amour, qui, ainsi que la petite vérole, fait d'autant plus de mal qu'il vous prend tard!"

"Kick the living donkey?—Ah, poor fellow, he means himself!" said Burridge, "all unsuccessful lovers think themselves asses; and so, in truth, they are. I wish I could have gone through my accomplishments before him; every time I exhibit I gain courage for displaying them at the Vernons." He then threw off the Macintosh and wig, and recommenced his pirouettes, plies, and battemens.

At the corner of the next street to Burridge's, Delamere perceived a crowd, and heard his own name uttered in an imploring voice. He drew near, and perceived poor Tim, his hat off, his coat torn, and his face bloody.

"You are a set of low, unhedicated var-

mints!" he was exclaiming, "as hignorant as brute-beasts! Is this the way to trate a genelman, for just sticking up a hintellectual hadwertisement?"

The police here interposed. Tim, it seems, in his zeal for Burridge and the yellow shawl, had stuck some of the notices in forbidden places guarded by a—"Bill-stickers beware!" but Tim had, as he said, "hambition and henergy." Half a crown from Delamere released Tim; and having pasted all his notices, he returned like a true conqueror to Burridge—bleeding, yet triumphant!

## CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER Delamere's interview with Burridge, days past by, and he appeared not at the Vernons: Jessica's heart was fevered with anxiety — indignation (as it always does, where there is true love to combat him) had yielded to a sickening sorrow. Her life was one perpetual half-tearful watch. A sound made her start—a knock made all her blood rush to her heart—every night she had fitful dreams that he was come—every morning she persuaded herself that she should see him in the course of the day! Sometimes she forced

herself to go out as a chance of meeting him; and when out she trembled and hastened back, lest he should have called in her absence! She would stand for whole dim foggy afternoons watching the people passing in the square—a cab like Delamere's, a horse like Delamere's, or a distant figure that recalled his, would make her cheek turn pale, and her bosom pant, and then, when she saw it was a delusion, the large tears would fill her eyes, and she would sink on her knees and hide her face, as if she would conceal from Heaven the idolatry of her heart!

She began to hate the very hopes that beguiled her! She began to feel that despair, as being a less restless, would be a more tolerable burden! Yet she blamed not Delamere; his character, like all true characters, blossomed and expanded in the garden of memory. He had never told her he loved her—yet she felt he had done so. She knew not to what to trace his desertion—his apparent fickleness—yet she did not believe it was indifference or inconstancy. Some words he had spoken

when she sat by his side at his own dinnertable—words of deep interest to her—had sunk
into her heart with the weight of truth. When
she had finished her little mournful ballad, he
had said, in a whisper, that reached no ear but
hers—"Ah! I hope you will yet own that moral
false, Jessica, and find that happy love can be
eternal too." He had pressed her hand at
parting with almost reverential tenderness—
Oh! no, no, he had loved her! She would not
have availed herself of his love to let him form
an union with one destitute—she would have
combated it! Alas! she had now nothing to
combat, and she yielded her very soul to its
passionate despair!

The poor protegée had now none to counsel—none to care for her. Lucy, in all the bright day-dreams of a first-love, was gone on a visit to Edward Seymour's relatives—they were engaged—ere long they were to be married. Edward had been disappointed of the expected living, but the interest of the Countess of Mandeville had availed to get him a highly

honourable and lucrative clerical appointment in one of our colonies.

And would Lucy let him go alone? No: Lucy loved many, but she adored him! was ready to forsake all others, and cleave only to him; and he felt a sort of exulting pride in bearing her where they must be all the world to each other! Lucy had urged Jessica (whose friendless state she did not forget, even in her own delight) to accompany them; but Sir William had declared he would not consent: and Jessica herself could not bear thus to put an eternal barrier between herself and Delamere. With regard to him, the daily, hourly watch, which was wearing out her heart, was over! Lady Vernon, no longer able to repress her curiosity and impatience, had sent to inquire after him; that very morning his card, with a P.D.A. had been left in the square, and her messenger returned with tidings that he had suddenly departed for the Continent.

Burridge was still very intent upon his education; Aurelia was flirting with Marvel

Brown, and Lord Stare. Mrs. Winter was in constant correspondence with Delamere; and Lary's wedding day was fixed. Miss Tadpole was already become Mrs. Tadpole Dempster; and the poor old widow of Sir Joseph, and the little hump-backed Miss Tadpole, were revelling in the delights of "Dempster Tadpole Grove," while the bride and bridegroom were making a continental tour.

As for Burridge, he was rather cross and snappish about Lucy's marriage; he did not much like any one to be married but himself; he thought Edward, who was six-and-twenty, too much of a boy; and he did not like to lose Lucy, whose conversation pleased him, who took an espicyle delight in drawing him out, and who had often helped him, before he went to school at the Eldertons, to get rid of a heavy hour or two.

"Ah! what folly this match of Lucy's is!" he exclaimed, "and to a mere boy! I thought she had more sense! And except Latin and Greek, he has no acomplishments. If they have a family, I shall pity poor Lucy; for she'll get no help from him. Ah! well, there's one good thing in it, as Bab says—there will be a breakfast and a dance, and it will be a good opportunity for me to exhibit my accomplishments, particularly as Bab will be there to waltz and galop with me; for she helps me up so, I almost doubt whether I should get on with any one else. However, I'll show off at Lucy's wedding!" and with this resolve he set as earnestly to his studies as does a school-boy against the awful day for awarding the prizes.

Meanwhile Delamere, who, as will be seen, was more in love with Jessica than he had been himself aware, before doubt, like a watchman, awoke passion from its first sweet dream, ashamed of the misery he could not hide—unable as yet to pay his court to Aurelia in the presence of Jessica—loathing life and love, and, as he fancied, all woman-kind, took the resolution so common to the wretched—of rushing into new scenes: as if in travelling,

however rapidly, one could ever travel away from that sad companion — a disappointed heart; as if the mind did not throw its own gloom over the brightest landscape; as if to the sorrowful all was not sameness of sorrow.

Lady Vernon, however, did not despair. She believed he had left England to get rid of a dawning interest in Jessica, and that, ere long, he would return; that flattered by the preference of the beautiful, and, as he believed, gifted Aurelia, he would propose, and all would be right, at least as right as most matches are before the gradual unweaving of the web of deception in which most brides envelop themselves; and then a man of the world would make the best of it—and Delamere was a man of the world.

Yes, in knowledge of men, and women, too, he was a man of the world—but he was a poet too; and to his heart, which he would fain have made a hive of sweets, the bees of experience were bringing stores of bitter honey. It was not that, knowing woman well, he believed that Jessica-young, beautiful, and, alas! so artful -really meant to throw herself away on old Burridge: he knew that while London abounded in men younger, handsomer, far more wealthy, and quite as vain, a girl like Jessica need not take up with Burridge: but then he did believe she deceived him for interested motives; he did believe she privately borrowed money of him, and suffered him to look to her future economy as his reward; he did believe she encouraged Marcus's passion, and that he had intruded upon a tender tête-à-tête; and so she was not the Jessica of his dream-the snowdrop of Beauty's garden. The whiteness of her soul was sullied in his eyes; yet had he known all-had he known the real circumstances of her borrowing that sum from Burridge-had he known her every thought and feeling, connected both with him and every other man she ever saw - worlds could not have deterred him from throwing himself at her feet. Her sorrow, her destitution, would have been deep claims upon his heart. It

man, and he had no faith! Jessica, slighted, deserted would not doubt him—he, the deserter, doubted, now, condemned her!

## CHAPTER XV.

In spite of the impatience and the exertions of Edward Seymour, some delays arose: they ever do, when we are awaiting a pleasurable event,—it is only misfortune which comes along with a rapid and heavy sweep, bearing down all obstacles. The spring had set in, and Lucy had determined on having her wedding celebrated at Vernon Grove. Sir William, who loved Lucy, and felt as if a constant sunbeam were about to take its departure from his gloomy home, determined she should not be thwarted in any wish she expressed; he gave her no fortune, but he made her many handsome presents; and, what was dearer still to her heart,

he expressed a deep sorrow at her approaching departure: but he knew the sad state of his own affairs—he knew that Edward had good expectations and an excellent appointment, and even he could not sacrifice his child's lasting happiness and well-being to his own personal comfort.

Lucy had for some months been living a new life-loving and loved. She who had glided on till then like a quiet stream, freshening the flowers among which it was hid-she, always a secondary, was now (as bride elect) a primary object with every one; but, above all, with him who was every one to her-she, who had hardly had half a dozen letters in her life before, now, in Edward's absence, heard from him and wrote to him every day; and even when he was in town, if business forced him from her, (business, the object of which was to make her his for ever,) he never failed to send her note with a bouquet, a bird, an engraving, some fruit, something he had seen, and fancied, as a lover fancies, that she might like; and that it would shew that his thoughts were ever with her. Ah! no marvel, then, that in her innocent and young delight Lucy did not discover the anguish Jessica so carefully concealed. First love is so engrossing, and Edward's devotion was of so active a nature, and when he was in town she was so little alone, and when he was away he wrote, and he required such long letters, and it was such joy to receive and such comfort to answer them; and Jessica would not for worlds have thrown the chill of her own disappointment over Lucy's warm young heart—Jessica was ever busy in preparing wedding presents for Lucy.

Delamere had sent the young fiancée a set of pearls, and a bridal veil of rare beauty, from Paris, and with it a letter—such a letter, Jessy thought, as an angel might have written to a bride of earth. Burridge (quite of his own accord) had given her a large rosewood work-box, well stocked, and lined with yellow—in truth, very handsome of its kind—and a little book on education, in which he had written Rous-

seau's remark, " Comme la véritable nourrice de l'enfant est la mère, le véritable précepteur est le père."

The London season had in some degree set in, before the impatient lover could get every thing settled. He knew no peace till Lucy was his: but Lucy was so happy in the devotion of her intended, she waited much more patiently than he did; at her heart, too, now that the time drew so near, a thousand natural regrets were busy-her parents, her brother, her sister, and Jessica, her early friend! Oh! it required all Edward's impassioned devotion to make her welcome the day which was to separate her. for a long indefinite period, from all those dear ones! Even old Burridge became almost lovely in her eyes, as she thought she should see him perhaps no more; and her manner to him was so warm, that he said to himself, "Ah! poor Lucy, I believe, now that the time is come, she thinks she has been a fool for her pains. I fancy she'd gladly see me in Edward Seymour's place. Why, what comfort or happiness can

a woman hope for, with a boy like that? She sees now it is too late; she'll get no help from him in educating her children. Ah! well, poor Lucy! if she had not accepted Edward, she would never have had me. I can only marry one wife at a time, as I said in fun to Bab the other day-fine woman, that Bab !- what shoulders and what height !- and quite young still-oh! I can see by the allusions she makes to times when she was a babe in arms, or before she was born, that she cannot be thirty-she would have a splendid family-heigh ho !- Jess looks very delicate; perhaps she frets at my not coming to the point: but really when one is daily in the company of four such fine clever creatures as the Eldertons, one doesn't like to go and shackle oneself .- Still, I did prevent Delamere from coming forward; and I'd no right to do that unless I meant to propose myself-and, after all, there's nothing in the world like Jess; and when once we are married, she'll be as merry as a grig, and as plump as a partridge."

Lucy invited whom she chose to her wedding—and Lucy did not choose to invite polite sneerers, who would have fancied they honoured her by their presence; Lucy wished to invite those who would be really flattered by being asked. Lady Vernon sneered at her list, but Edward approved: he loved the Christian kindness that had prompted her to ask Burridge, and all the Eldertons, and old Lady Tadpole and the little humpbacked Miss Tadpole. The Countess of Mandeville and Egbert were of course of the party; and, to please Aurelia, Lord Stare and Marvel Brown were included.

Lucy did not forget to insist on Tim's being brought; but that was needless, as Burridge could not have made his toilet without him. Tim, therefore, had a private interview with Macbotcher on his own account; for Tim considered the being domesticated in the "rural country" with Flounce, as a "craesus" in his own destiny; and he had lately read a leading article on credit, and its results and importance

to a free country, written perhaps by some poor debtor, which convinced him it was a great credit to run in debt. Macbotcher, however, was no fashionable tailor, encouraging young men to ruin themselves; he would not trust him beyond the amount of his next quarter's wages, and wisely made him sign 'a bit o' paper,' making the total over to him. But what was this to Tim? The old green velvet waistcoat looked like new plush, for Mrs. Macbotcher had scoured it. Then Tim had a coat that tightened his waist-an old black of Burridge's,-which, with basket buttons, looked at night like blue. He had several white waistcoats, and a whole tribe of old black pantaloons, in which Burridge had figured in his youth, and which, with a pair of black silk stockings, he bought for a shilling of the Jew, and which Flounce mended, made him, with his tight coat, a white neckcloth, and white waistcoat, and the eightpenny white gloves, (also mended by Flounce,) a very smart young butler, particularly as he was tall and straight, had a fine

complexion, bright black eyes, and, privately, with Flounce's advice, sprinkled his hair with powder, which Burridge, purblind and self-engrossed, was not aware of, till the tax-gatherer, more sharpsighted, compelled the furious master to pay duty for a man servant wearing nowder: but that was a result yet undeveloped, and Burridge was still in happy ignorance of the powder and the impending tax; and Tim, as he put in his white neckcloth a brooch with Flounce's hair, thought himself a very pretty fellow indeed, and was confirmed in that opinion by a smile from Flounce, who, being romantic, eight and twenty, and having been jilted by several older lovers, set her heart on winning the first affections of a "galless" nature. as she called Tim's; and Tim, caught by her fine words and fine cap, was desperately smitten, and said, "his haffections was set on a hobject in quite a helevated spear, who had greatly the adwantage of him in hedication. hears, and haristockracy."

It was on the day previous to their repairing

to Vernon Hall, which was situated in a lovely part of Berkshire, near Windsor Forest, that the hopes of all were much excited by a hurried note from Burridge; it was addressed to Jessica, and announced that he was suddenly called into the city, but hoped to arrive in the evening—the bearer of the very best tidings and most agreeable surprise any of them had ever heard of or met with.

The hopes of all were raised to the highest pitch. Sir William, who happened to be at home, ill, and out of spirits, had no doubt that Burridge had secured him the ——ship, and thereupon he hastened to his club to win back a large sum he had lost, and, of course, to venture a small one which still remained to him. Lucy rejoiced in the idea of leaving her family in comfort. Lady Vernon drove to Marabout's, to get a splendid lace cloak which she had denied herself before; and, privately, to order one like it for Aurelia. Likewise those two ladies, in the height of their hopes and good-humour, gave Flounce, in packing up for Vernon Hall,

a variety of very good things, which, but for this sudden change in their prospects, they would not have parted with, but had decided on wearing all the summer.

he had lost; but he was not much disheartened—Burridge's excellent news would set all
to rights. From the extreme elation of his
note, all fancied he must have heard of some
appointment better than the ——ship: What
could it be? Nothing in the gift of the minister was thought too grand: so and so might
be dead—Sir William might be appointed in
his place! Sir William wished he had staid
longer at his club, and Lady Vernon that she
had ordered Marabout to send home a veil with
which she had been sorely tempted.

Marcus, who had been absent for some time, being quartered at Hounslow, arriving in time to hear the good news, got a splendid hunter on tick. Lucy's wedding was to take place on the third day after their arrival at Vernon Hall, and Marcus was to join them there.

The lovers were standing apart near the window, hand in hand, watching the crescent moon, which was to be their honey-moon; Jessica was finishing a beautiful wedding reticule for Lucy, and occasionally chiding Marcus, who was caricaturing the whole party; Sir William was in a sulky nap ; Aurelia was stringing some beads, and Lady Vernon reading a newspaper; when a loud knock startled all. Marcus rushed to a window, opened it, and looked out, just in time to see the hats of Burridge and Tim. Eager footsteps were heard ascending the stairs-the door was flung open -Burridge and Tim, red hot with haste, appeared—the latter carrying a large parcel. Burridge seized it, rushed up to Jessica, threw it on the table before her, and exclaimed, "There it is! I've got it back quite safe, and none the worse !"

<sup>&</sup>quot;What-what is it?" asked Sir William.

<sup>&</sup>quot;What is it?" faintly echoed all.

<sup>&</sup>quot;What! why Jessy's yellow shawl, to be sure! What should it be? Why, Jess, you seem quite overcome: didn't I tell you to pre-

pare for wonderful good luck? Do you think it's injured? it seems to me as bright as ever! it was Macbotcher's wife picked it up in the street; and, with a degree of honesty that deserves to be published to the world, no sooner saw some of the notices which at last I luckily thought of sending to Macbotcher, than, stipulating, to be sure, that I should give her girls, who were to have worn it by turns till they got married, a guinea a piece, she sent it back to me -a shawl I gave thirty pounds for! and now take care of it, Jess: for what with the original price, the notices, the advertisements, and now this large reward, it has been a ruinous shawl to me-besides constantly running in my head when I wanted to give all my attention to other things."

What a tremendous, unexpected shock! Blank dismay sat on every face but Marcus's: he, to hide from Burridge the discomfiture which would so seriously have offended him, in wellacted transports, which compelled all to smile, unpacked the shawl, expatiated on its beauty, held up the flaring horror, praised Burridge up to the skies, and proposed, as the dessert was not yet removed, they should have in some of Sir William's choicest wine to drink to the return of the shawl, and the health of the meritorious, persevering, immortal Burridge!

Lady Vernon stepped out to send Flounce to countermand the cloak she had ordered for Aurelia; and Aurelia herself indulged in a mournful retrospect of the things she had given to Flounce.

Jessica, seeing her uncle pale with despair, stole up to him, pressed his cold hand, and whispered to him, that she would write that very evening to Burridge, to re-urge his using his interest to get him the ——ship; and thus somewhat comforted, Sir William joined the merry party, to whom Marcus was proposing toast after toast, and bumper after bumper: so that (we grieve to own it) ere long, Burridge, unused to drink much wine, which he considered a wilful waste, was so very jolly, that the ladies thought it well to retire. Even in

the presence of Jessy he had begun a warm eulogy on the charms of Bab; and, excited by the mischievous Marcus, had squeaked, not merely through "I'd be a butterfly," but through several verses of Bacchanalian songs.

Edward Seymour soon joined the ladies, and Sir William shrunk away to his club. Marcus, having made Burridge quite tipsy, and being half so himself, was very anxious to get him up into the drawing-room to exhibit all his Eldertonian exercises, some of which he had reeled through before Marcus; but unluckily, or perhaps luckily, in trying a pirouette in the hall, he fell; and not being able to keep his footing when he was raised, Tim, who had rushed with the other servants to his master's assistance. boldly observed that his master's " 'ead was so full of larning, there warn't no room in it for liquor; that Mr. Marcus must see his master warn't fit to show off afore the ladies; and as for dancing, he had much ado to stand. No one despises a 'abitual drunkard more nor I do," said Tim, "and I'm proud to say I

wouldn't be butler to one; but on grand horcasions any genelman may be overtaken, and the recovery of that 'ere helegant shawl, which costed a fortune, and 'as been so hadwertised, is a grand hoccasion: but measter aint himself just now, and I can't consint to his being disgraced afore any leddy he keeps company with."

Marcus, being rather tipsy, grew angry, and insisted; and Burridge, being very anxious to exhibit, pushed off Tim, clung to Marcus, and began to stumble up stairs, squeaking "I'd be a butterfly," when Edward Seymour, sent by the ladies, whom this bustle had alarmed, came down, told Marcus they were gone to bed, as they did not choose to see Burridge in his elevated state, urged him to do the same, helped Tim to escort Burridge to a cab, and saw him safely driven off, still squeaking "My mother had a maid called Barbara," and "I'd be a Butterfly."

## CHAPTER XVI.

Ir was a bright, balmy day in May, Lucy's wedding day—the party were assembled at Vernon Hall, an elegant mansion, with velvet lawns, and lawn-like meadows, and bright parterres, and rich shrubberies, and a grove of horse-chestnuts, which seemed to be rearing their spiral waxen blossoms in honour of the bride, and beautiful beech-trees feathering down to the soft flower-strewn grass, in those first bright tints, which pass as rapidly away as do the first dreams of joy from the heart of youth!

It was an elegant English abode, nothing very ancient or very grand—but grace and comfort seemed to have presided over all the arrangements. The laburnum hung its clusters of gold in costly profusion, the lilac, the white and pink May filled the air with fragrance, and all the fruit-trees were covered with delicate blossoms.

Lucy looked as interesting as blushes, tears, and smiles, orange flowers, white blonde, and white satin, could make her. Burridge's wig was curled to perfection, and with white gloves, white favours, and a white waistcoat, he looked almost as if he were going to be married himself. He had arrived in a post-chaise with Bab and Pris. Dolly and Lavinia came somewhat later; they said they had been driven down in a four-in-hand, but we have some idea they came outside that same four-in-hand. This we should never have guessed, but that Lord Stare, who sometimes amused himself with driving the Windsor stage, which indeed he had done on the day preceding Lucy's wedding, put up his glass, when he saw them at Vernon Hall, and whispered to Aurelia, that they were monstrous. like two old maids who'd bored him to death on the top of the stage, one, "for my sins, confound her?" he added, "having sat next me on the box, screeching like an owl into my ear, and clinging to me, pon 'honour! like a leech."

However, Lavy and Doll did not appear ever to have seen him before; and Doll boldly put up an old gilt frame of an eye-glass, through which she saw all the better for the loss of the glass: and her eye looked so fierce and determined, that Lord Stare was quite defeated, and aimed his jeweled toy at the hump on poor little Miss Tadpole's back. While he whispered to Aurelia, that "'pon his honour, it was the mountain and the mouse;" and she was so overcome by his wit, that she was seized with a fit of laughter, which encouraged him in his miserable attempts at ridiculing all her father's guests, not excepting Burridge himself.

Edward Seymour's father, a venerable old man, and his mother, Lady Bridget Seymour, a prim, kind, but somewhat ceremonious old Scotch lady, were present. They were both very fond of Lucy, and had sanctioned Edward's settling on her all the little fortune he possessed: it was a deep grief to them to part with him for a foreign land; but, though they had good expectations, they were not rich. Old Mr. Seymour had a good living; and out of it he had saved a small fortune for their only son.

All the Elderton's were in new book-muslins, over glazed calico petticoats, which they were sure the men at least would mistake for satin. They had book-muslin drawn-bonnets, and Burridge had gallantly presented each with a pair of white gloves, (price eightpence halfpenny,) but that he deeply regretted, when he found baskets of gloves and favours set out for all the guests.

Marvel Brown was in high good-humour. He had a coat, of a shade of slate-colour no one had yet seen. As he had a white throat and fine whiskers, his collar was à la Byron, but he had a tiny jabot of fairy lace, and ruffles to match; his hair was combed, un peu à la giraffe, off his forehead, but fell on his slate-coloured velvet collar in ringlets; a moustache and imperial he had long been cherishing, were now full grown, and dyed black; and as he was very clean, neat, and really good-looking, he was gazed at with die-a-way admiration by Mrs. Winter, undisguised interest by all the Eldertons, and was honoured by a protracted glance from Aurelia's beautiful eyes. He stood in a choice attitude, showing off his hand and rings, and waving a sprig of orange-blossom, said, in modulated tones, to Lucy, heedless of the blushes he called forth—

"The last braid of thy tresses wreathing;
The last white pearl is on thy brow,
The orange-flower's beside thee breathing,"

And then, Lucy having escaped, he turned to Mrs. Winter, and playfully placing the orangeblossom on her temple, said—

<sup>&</sup>quot;She has braided back her beautiful hair, O'er a brow like Italian marble fair!"

At this moment the carriages were announced, and all repaired to the church.

Lucy was married by a venerable old clergyman, who had held her in his arms at the baptismal font. The ceremony was most impressively read; and all who had feeling wept; but all who had not, had embroidered cambric handkerchiefs, except the Eldertons, who sported calico, and Burridge a red silk, hemmed and marked by Bab.

Edward Seymour's face was radiant with pride and joy, and Lucy's tears did not seem to flow bitterly. The saddest of the party were Jessica, pale as marble, and checking her tears at the loss of her best friend; Sir William Vernon, who felt, for the first time, how dear to him was his good and gentle Lucy; and old Mr. and Lady Bridget Seymour, who were at that age when "fear rather than hope is the heart's prophet," and who doubted whether they should ever see their son again.

Marcus arrived just as the ceremony was completed: for having determined to ride his new hunter, who proved as vicious as he was thorough bred, he had been thrown, was obliged to return to change his dress, and at last modestly arrived in a tandem.

On the return of the party from the church, a carriage was seen moving along at a hearselike pace: Egbert put out a little smiling face, and the countess raised herself from the pillows which supported her, and waved her hand.

Pris darted down to assist her, and after a long delay, supported the invalid to an armchair, placed for her at the breakfast-table.

Lady Vernon was not pleased; she had hoped Delamere, to whom she had written, would have arrived for the wedding. Perhaps, as none are all evil, she too felt some natural regrets at the departure of Lucy. And Aurelia was flirting so openly with that worst of detrimentals, Marvel Brown; and Lord Stare seemed, with habitual inconstancy, to be trying to please Jessica, who, pale and sad as she was, looked very lovely, and whose total indifference to his lordship piqued him into

trying to fascinate her. Then, too, Lady Tadpole, relict of Sir Joseph, was so immensely fat, and coarsely vulgar, and dropped her h's, and boasted so of Mrs. Dempster Tadpole Dempster, and so toadied the countess; and little Miss Tadpole had such a small sharp face, and such bright black eyes, which she fixed so often on Lady Vernon, that her ladyship, who had a narrow-minded prejudice against the deformed, felt very uneasy, and grew very polite to the Tadpoles.

Mandeville Castle, a fine old building, was within a few miles of Vernon Hall. Delamere Priory, too, a curious old place, was at a short distance; Dempster Grove within a drive; and Mrs. Winter had a cottage in the forest, which she called "The Hermitage."

"How very beautiful every thing must be coming on at the Castle, my lady," said Lady Tadpole to the countess; "I often took the liberty, your ladyship, to go and give a heye to thinks; for indeed, my lady, as I say to my gals, great folks little knows how they gets

cheated. I'm sure there was something very wrong about that Alderney cow, with the one horn, my lady! she ought to have gave twice the milk when the calf was took—taken, I mean, your ladyship,—however, I done—I did—all I could—I tried to have a finger in every pie, my lady!"

Little Miss Tadpole here turned her sharp eyes suddenly on Lady Vernon, and detected a sneer, which was instantly changed into a smile. The countess kindly thanked the huge Lady Tadpole, who, en passant, we must observe, although there was no flaw in her moral escutcheon, had once, if report said true, reigned queen of old Sir Joseph's kitchen,—then of his store-room,—and finally of his heart.

Jessica, who was dressed in pale pink, the colour chosen by Lucy for herself and Aurelia as bride's-maids, could not wear her yellow shawl, which highly offended Burridge, who rudely turned his back to her, and devoted himself to Bab.

The breakfast passed off rather mournfully; the approaching departure of Lucy threw a gloom over all.

She soon rose, attended by her bride's-maids, to dress herself for travelling, while Aurelia, instead of assisting her, was twirling her own ringlets at a glass. Lucy threw herself into Jessica's arms, and took a weeping farewell. She handed her a small packet, and said, " If you are ever in real need, beloved Jessy, you are to open this; and if, as I foresee, when your poor Lucy is gone, you are very unhappy here, my Edward, my husband (and she blushed, for she called him so for the first time,) bids me say, that if you will write to us, he will arrange every thing for your voyage, that you must make your home with us, and that he will do all in his power to prove a brother to her, who has been indeed a sister to me."

Lucy and Jessica then dried their tears; and so engrossed was Aurelia, examining the length of her eye-lashes, and smoothing her hair, that the bride was equipped for travelling before she left the mirror!

Champaign had performed its wonted office in enlivening the breakfast-party; Marcus had been amusing himself in making the Eldertons and little Miss Tadpole what he called "bosky." Marvel Brown was gazing alternately at the countess, Mrs. Winter, and Bab, and his usually tender gaze was rendered doubly so by the wine he had taken. Lady Tadpole was very talkative; Lord Stare became very devoted to Aurelia, on her return; and Burridge, as Lucy drew near to bid him farewell, began in loud and pompous French,

"Madame Seymour, ong vous nomment ainsi pour la preemièr fois, j'espere que ce nom vous porterha bonhoor, et—" Here he paused—"et—vous porterha bonhoor, et—vous porterha bonhoor, et—" "Que des roses sans épines," whispered Bab, but in vain—Burridge had lost the thread.

"Confound it, Lucy!" he said, "I wanted to wish you joy in French, but my heart's too full, and will speak out in plain English. God bless you, Lucy! you're a good girl; and I hope your husband will have the sense to value you! I wish he was a little older—but that he'll be in time, and more of a man, too! It's a sad thing for a woman to get no help in educating her children; and boys of his age don't understand those things like men of mine —but God bless you! Lucy, and make you as happy as ——" Here poor old Burridge's feelings overcame him, and he sat down and hid his face in his red handkerchief.

Lucy's painful task of leave-taking is over.

Lady Vernon wept a little; Sir William kissed her fervently, and turned hastily into the shrubbery; Jessica's tears fell like rain; Aurelia was in becoming woe, attended by Lord Stare and Marvel Brown: he gently ejaculated, as Lucy shook hands with him, "How blessings brighten as they take their leave!"

But the fleet horses bear the light chariot rapidly away—the white favours flutter—Lucy's maid and Edward's man are regaling themselves in the rumble with bride-cake and flirtation, and Lucy is weeping on the shoulder of him who henceforth is to be the whole world to her.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Lucy being fairly off, the party began to remember that they were met to celebrate a wedding, not a funeral—that the young people had health, love, and every worldly blessing—that the place of their destination was very healthy, and that, instead of bewailing, they ought to wish them joy, and do their best to amuse themselves.

The old Seymours promptly took their leave; Sir William, on the plea of urgent business, returned to town; Lady Vernon, with a remark on the duty of keeping up her spirits for the sake of her other children, reassumed her composure; the countess retired to lie down and take a composing draught; and Marcus who had sprung into the chariot, to kiss Lucy for the last time, dashed away a tear that would arise—and, seizing a bottle of champaign, proposed the health of the newly-married pair: all drank his toast, and then they began to discuss the best way of spending the day.

After several plans had been proposed and rejected, it was agreed that they should visit Windsor Castle and Virginia Water, as both were within a drive, return to Vernon Hall to dinner, and end the day with a dance. The question now was, " how they should go?" Lord Stare offered to drive Jessica and Aurelia in his phaeton; but Lady Vernon said, " she must have her Jessy in the carriage with her, that they might talk of dear Lucy;" so Lord Stare went tête-à-tête with Aurelia, and Marvel Brown drove Mrs. Winter in his cab-she generously offering her pony-chair to any of the party, in order to promote this arrangement. Poor Jessica went with Lady Vernon, Egbert, and Pris; Lady Tadpole took Dolly in her chariot, where the poor thing, though a tough Elderton, was almost squeezed to death by her huge companion. There then remained Marcus and his tandem, the old clergyman Dr. Osborne, Lavy, Bab, Miss Tadpole, Burridge, the pony-chair, and two excellent riding horses.

Marcus, with genuine kindness of heart, offered to take the poor little deformed Miss Tadpole in the tandem with him; and she, brave as a lion, her eyes sparkling with joy, agreed. While Lord Stare, when he heard of the plan, said to Aurelia, that "'pon honour, it was a capital arrangement, for no accident could make poor little Tadpole more deformed; but, by Jove! a hump on her other shoulder would be quite a God-send to her, and make her almost straight again."

Unluckily for Lord Stare, as he made this memorable remark in the garden near a bower, he did not know that the poor little object of his unmanly ridicule had shrunk into it, waiting till Marcus came to say "his tandem was ready." With the quick, passionate feelings which so often belong to the deformed, she came forth, her eyes glaring with revenge-" Do you think, my lord," she said, " that any fall that you may meet with in your journey through life, will ever make your weak and crooked mind one whit the straighter? No, no-the paltry and coward man, who can aim his witless jests at an afflicted woman, is more an object of scorn than she is-for he is deformed at heart! Falls you will have, I doubt not-the weak and vain never escape them; and perhaps some downfall may await the tall, straight, heartless beauty who smiles at your poor attempts at satire: I hope you may both bear your burdens as I have borne mine, and not fall in with those who will turn to scorn the trials which should have made you sacred!"

So saying, the little hump-backed woman passed proudly by the startled beauty and the silly lord, and for the moment they looked meaner and smaller and more deformed than she did.

" 'Pon honour! she's infernally vicious!

hump-backs always are," said Lord Stare; "and so prophetic too! I declare, I feel as if something fatal would befall me. In the days of witches I'd have had her burnt, by George! I would: but here's my fellow coming to say the phaeton waits—come, divine Aurelia! By Jove! that witch's eyes haunt me! Look at me, beautiful one! your glance will destroy her evil spell."

When the party set out, it seemed that Lavy was to drive in the pony-chair with Dr. Osborne; and Bab and Burridge had decided on going on horseback, Aurelia having offered Bab her habit and hat, to secure her own tête-à-tête with Lord Stare. It was a bold step of Bab's that, for she had never ridden; but she said to herself, "What woman has done, woman may do! and if the fragile Jessica and witless Aurelia can manage a horse, shall Bab Elderton be afraid? No—come what will, I will not come off; and then no harm can befal me!" Bab saw that Burridge was much caught by dash — she suspected that he was not quite pleased with Jessy — she saw he admired her-

self with a woman's instinct - she felt sure Jessica would never dream of marrying Burridge, and she (Bab) dreamt of nothing else: the most noble-minded women are but too ready to rob a rival of a lover, and Bab was a bold, daring creature, and not over scrupulous. Alas! poor Burridge! Burridge had not been on a horse for many years, and on a spirited one never. But Bab had said he must look so well on horseback-so good a dancer must be a fine rider-he had just the figure for riding. And Marcus mischievously offered what he called a very gentle horse, fit to carry a lady, and Bab proposed to ride with him; and Jessica passed, without the yellow shawl, her looks averted; while Bab fixed her long black eyes on him; and Burridge was neither more nor less than man-he was mortal-and vanity and revenge prompted-and he agreed!

Bab, with a thick veil, a riding-hat, her long black ringlets, and a high colour, partly art, and partly the flush of triumph, looked really rather a fine woman. She had availed herself of all Aurelia's elegant accourtements, and came down in high spirits, playfully switching every thing and every one she met with a beautiful little horsewhip. Pris was gone, or she might have interposed, but no one else among the Eldertons dared censure Bab.

Burridge looked rather pale, as he saw the horse pawing and prancing, while the groom held him; but Bab led the way, and Burridge could not draw back.

"My dear Miss Bab, there's no hurry," said-Burridge; "let them all set off—they'll make such a dust in the road!"

No one seemed inclined to go till the oddities were mounted; but Bab, beginning to have some doubts as to how she should get on the horse herself, proposed to Burridge to take a turn in the garden till they were gone. Glad of this respite, Burridge agreed. The party then set off.

We have said that Bab was a bold woman; and certainly to mount a spirited horse for the first time, and, untaught, to set off full speed, was a proof of the truth of this assertion.

Bab found it more difficult to mount than she had fancied it would be—all things, when done well, look so easy; and she had often seen Jessy and the Vernon girls place their feet for a moment in the groom's hand, and spring like sylphs to the saddle: but vainly now the groom extended his hand—thrice he tried to raise Bab, and thrice she fell; and then she called for a chair. At last, amid the stifled laughs of all the servants, by the help of the chair Bab was mounted; but ignorant how to handle the bridle, she jerked and tugged the delicate-mouthed horse till he reared and plunged —but Bab kept her seat.

"I'd better hold firm, ma'am, till the old gentleman's mounted,—he aint in no despret hurry, it seems," said the groom; and Bab gladly consented. She then ventured to look round, and saw Burridge, who had had as many failures as herself, availing himself of her chair—terror was legible in every feature—but Tim held the horse.

"There, Tim, lead him to the gate; he's a vicious creature, I can see! There's something very odd about his ears and his fore-feet, isn't there, Tim?"

"Oh! Lord, no, measter, that's only his natur," said Tim, who in his rural career had been used to horses; "he may be a bit frisky, but give him the whip, and he'll go, I'se warrant. Osses 'ave a deal of hintellect, but, like 'uman natur, they likes to give themselves hairs—don't let him get the hupper 'and, that don't do for the lower horders, which brutes nat'ral is, and only brutes, for hall men is hequals: give him the whip, sur, and never fear, sur."

Burridge groaned: "Lead him to the gate, Tim——and, Tim, when I'm safe in the road, outside the gate, and Miss Bab too, ask the groom to let you go in his place."

Bab and Burridge were led outside the gate
—the groom joyfully consented, saying, "I'm
very glad to be off going with them old merryandrews, as don't know a oss from a cow, I do
werrily believe."

Tim then mounted the groom's horse, and the party set out at first with very tight reins, and many inquiries, on the part of Burridge, whether his saddle was safe, his bridle right, &c. &c.; but at last he seemed to feel a little more secure, and ventured a glance of triumph at Bab. Bab, anxious to show off before him. gave her steed a cut with the whip, such a cut as the thorough-bred and high-spirited creature was little accustomed to-to her intense terror and dismay, he darted forward full gallop! Bab clung to the mane—the pommel—but she lost the rein: thus teased by her gripe of his mane, but unrestrained by any bridle, the horse flew along like Mazeppa's of yore; and Burridge's steed, fired with a noble ambition, followed at his fleetest pace. Bab's screams filled the air, and added to the fright of her horse; Burridge, with groans not loud but deep, bent forward, caught hold also of the mane, shut his eyes, and resigned himself to his fate. Tim was far behind-he was not so well mounted, and all his efforts to reach them

were vain. Bab lost hat and whip, but she kept her seat. Burridge, alas! lost hat and wig. In this awful plight they overtook, and dashed past, tandem, phaeton, poney-chair—in short, all the company—with apparition-like speed. They came, and were gone, spreading terror and dismay over the party; and Tim, who rode up in a little time, could only tell what all already knew, that "Measter, and Miss Bab Helderton, was runned away with!" He then hastened on in pursuit of them, or, as Lord Stare suggested to Aurelia, "probably to be in at the death." The whole party followed, to learn the result of the accident.

On sped the fleet horses with untired feet, faster and faster—and still on stuck as fast Bab and Burridge. At last they came to a fence, and Bab saw a green shiny pond of water behind it; Burridge saw nothing—his eyes were closed! Bab's horse, a famous leaper, took the fence, and in the next moment Bab, who had inwardly vowed that, come what

would, she would not come off, found herself still on her charger's back in the middle of the pond: the next instant a cry was heard, and Burridge was hurled by his horse, first high in air, and then into the same safe but slimy abode of all sorts of reptiles. He still kept his eyes closed, and groaned aloud.

"Burridge! Jacob! beloved Jacob! you are safe—we are both safe!" said Bab, now slipping from her horse, and going to his assistance: "stand up, it is not deep; it does not come up to my waist; give me your hand."

Burridge opened his eyes, and beheld Bab, covered with slime and slugs—but "a water nymph," with pearled wrists, bearing him safe to aged Nereus' cave, would not have seemed lovelier to him than did Bab at that moment.

"Are you hurt, Bab? My dear Bab, are you safe?"

"Yes, Jacob, dearest Jacob! and you?" said Bab, removing a quantity of green slime and water-weed from his bald head.

" Let us get out of this odious place," said

Burridge: "all sorts of reptiles are stinging and biting me."

"Oh, heaven! they may be poisonous!" cried Bab, clambering up the side of the pond. Burridge did the same, and then Bab gently sank on the grass, and murmuring, "Jacob, you are safe!" closed her eyes. Burridge was alarmed: he thought she had had enough of the water; but vet, as an orthodox remedy, he got some more out of the pond with the palms of his hands, and flung it in her face-he then began to fan her with an immense dock-leafat last, seeing no symptom of returning life, he said aloud, though to himself, "Confound it! I must get her back into the pond,-that'll bring her to, I suppose;" when she unclosed her eyes, and said, "Dearest Jacob, you are saved!"

"Yes!" said Burridge, "I am saved, Bab, from one peril,—don't make me incur another! I, the intended of one woman, must not hear another call me her dearest Jacob. Confound these slugs, how they bite!"

Slugs? alas! poor Burridge, several immense horse-leeches, who had formed an attachment for him in the pond, had, during his terror about Bab, fastened on his bald head, his ears, and neck.

"Sir," said Bab, "this is unjust—unmanly! In my terror—my excitement—the secret of my heart may have escaped me, but——"

A load roar from Burridge made her pause, and look up. "Help me! help me, Bab! they will have my head off!" and Bab, with a woman's forgiving spirit, tore off the cruel bloodsuckers, and staunched the wounds with her scarf.

"Are you easier?" she asked, tenderly, taking his hand.

"In body, yes, Bab; but I'm not easy in my mind—it seems treason to Jessica to let you take my hand."

Bab withdrew hers, she hid her face in it, and began to sob.

" Don't cry, Bab!"

" Oh! I have betrayed the hidden secret of

my heart to you—the affianced of another—and you despise me!"

"No, Bab! by heaven, no! I admire you
—I fear, I like you too well, Bab. Fool that
I was! to think I could come in daily contact
with so fine a creature—I, so susceptible of
woman's charms—and remain quite true at
heart to Jess! but my honour is engaged, and
I would sooner die than deceive her. I fear I
must give up your instructions, Bab."

"Ah! ah! ah!—no—no—no:" shrieked Bab, who felt that if he did she must give up the guinea a week: "no—no—no! say you will come as of yore! I will be your friend: mine is no vile, earthly passion—my feelings even Jessica (envied being!) must approve. But, as some balm to my wounded and stricken heart, say that, had you been free, you would haveloved poor Bab!—fond, silly, devoted Bab! Say that, should it not be as you deem, should the richly-blessed Jessica prove unworthy, cold, false (let me say it, merely in supposition, it soothes me so); should she not love, not

appreciate, not joyfully accept you,—you will turn to the heart you have won—an innocent wirgin heart, which gave itself unconsciously to you! to you, who seem to the poor Bab the bean ideal of her early dream—say so?"

"I do!" and Burridge, having lost his bandkerchief en route, wiped his eye in the dock leaf.

"Then, if Jessica deceives you, you will marry poor Bab—your own admiring Bab?"

"I will! But do not encourage the hope, Bab—Jess adores me."

"Too probably she does. Ah! who would not?" sighed Bab. "But you will come, as you have done of yore, every morning at ten? I cannot live, if you do not!" (There was some truth in that.)

"I will! But this subject must never be renewed between us."

"Never!" said Bab; "my maiden pride and purity, and your manly honour, Jacob— Mr. Burridge, I mean—alike forbid!"

Tim now appeared. Surprised to see Bur-

ridge's horse eating the grass outside the fence, he had climbed over it—skirted the pond—perceived the riders—brought Burridge his hat and wig, which he had picked up on the road—he then caught the grazing horses, and tied them to a tree—sent a farmer's boy to an inn which he had passed on the road, for a post-chaise; and, lastly, set off to assure the alarmed party of the safety of the equestrians. They, on pleasure bent, then continued their excursion.

Bab and Burridge got back to Vernon Hall in the post-chaise. Tim, and a man from the inn, brought home the steeds; while Bab, as she made her toilet, and thought of Burridge's conditional promise, said to herself, that it had certainly been a "neck-or-nothing" chase; but, if she had perilled her neck, it had not been for nothing! for Jessica was a romantic simpleton—and she was now sure to be Mrs. Burridge at last.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

BURRIDGE was a long time at his toilet; for when Tim removed his wig, in order to curl and oil it for the evening, all the leech-holes (which it had effectually closed) bled afresh. The little of nap that remained on Tim's hat was used, and all the cobwebs he could find applied, before the bleeding ceased; but, as Tim observed, "no one could see the marks under the wig; and his measter's face looked a deal fairer and genteeler." But what was even more important, the bleeding probably saved Burridge—who, heated as he was, had been so suddenly immersed in the pond—from taking cold.

When he reached the drawing-room, he found Bab all in white, with a garland of real flowers in her hair, reclining on a sofa: her eyes were closed; but Burridge's copy of "I'd be a butterfly" lay on a table beside her!

Burridge gazed spell-bound for a moment; he felt a strong impulse to draw near the sleeping beauty; but he remembered that he was affianced to another, and, with noble selfcontrol, opened a glass door, and walked out upon the lawn.

Bab, who had watched him through a chink in her ringlets, then rose, and followed him. They wandered about for some time; at last they came to a summer house. In an inner room was an old forgotten harpsichord; Bab sat down to it, and played the accompaniments of some of his songs. Burridge went through them all: he then practised with Bab his galops and waltzes for the evening; and they had just sunk, wearied, on a seat, when they heard steps approaching the summer-house,

and presently two people entered the adjoining room.

Bab hastily drew the bolt of the inner door: Burridge looked alarmed: "Be still," she whispered; "it might ruin my reputation were it known I was tête-à-tête with you in this summer-house: I, an unprotected and, some say, lovely young creature; and you, a man, only too fascinating to women! If my peace of heart is gone, my peace of mind, which depends on my spotless reputation, shall not go too! Do you think that those, who judge by their own coarse selves, will believe that Bab can sit by her Jacob's side, 'in these deep solitudes,' with no guard, unless

Of viewless angels, who protect the good ? '

or that a man, known for his passionate admiration for youth, genius, and beauty, can (strong in honour) look on Bab Elderton as a sister?"

"Oh, Bab! oh!" said the entranced Burridge, his eyes seeming to set his spectacles on

fire, "I wish I were free, but I cannot wish

you were my sister."

"Listen," whispered Bab, "I know those voices; they are those of Tim and Flounce, in animated converse." Our Platonic lovers heard distinctly every word of the more terrestrial pair.

"Indeed, Tim," said Flounce, "I can't say I approves of your mysteriousness—you're as great a mystery as them Mysteries of Udolpo I wept over last night. Here you had a letter this morn, with a black seal—direct, 'Mr. Timothy Hibbert, Esquire;' and you've throwed out the most tintillising 'ints, and now you won't tell me nothing."

"In time, Han, you shall know hall."

"Han! indeed! and such abruptiveness! Hannethina is the name I choose to be called; and if I am not lovely, or dearest, or divinest Hannethina to you—there's those I've turned my back on for your sake, who loves the very ground I floats on, and the air I exhales!—I don't care what's in your letter, sur—there's

no acquisitiveness in my nature; I only asked, because if, through the loss of friend or patron, you were in want, or poverty, I would have flowed to your assistance." (Cunning Flounce! from Tim's hints and airs, she had a great idea that some very good news was contained in the letter directed, "Mr. Timothy Hibbert, Esquire.")

Tim remained silent: but he tried to take Flounce's hand. "Don't go for to profane my 'and, while you're a breaking my 'art. Oh, Tim! I thought you had a galless nature, and an untired 'art: and so you winned away my young haffections; but I see it hall! Oh, false, delusive swan! Another, I will not bemean myself to name, is my rival. I should be only fit for the Elysium of the indignant blind, if I did not see it! Go, show her the letter you 'ide from Hannethina; but see if she'll refuse a carriage for you. Oh, Tim! but for this preposition in your favour, I might have married to my coach!" Here tears came to Flounce's assistance.

"Hannethina, divinest Hannethina," said Tim, much affected: "from you, my superior in hintellect, hears, and harristocracy, I can 'ide nothing."

"In hintellect and sitivation, Mr. Ibbet, I may have the advantage; but as to hears, it is such a mere trifle, I desire you'll never make no ellusion to it. If it were not for your hinconstancy, Tim, my thoughts would never meander over my own adwantages."

"Hinconstancy I hexecrates!" said Tim, with energy; "and never giv' a thought to another, since I kip' company with you. If I wanted to keep this letter a secret for a time, it was for our mutual benefice; but I cannot refuse you nothing—only, you must premise the most involuble secrecy. See, then,—by this letter I learn hunkle's dead! He's left me seventy pound a year clear, and hair presumptuous to a farm, worth two hundred per annum. There's only father atween me and that'ere fust-rate farm."

"Well, Mr. Hibbet, when I prayed you to

show me that 'ere letter, I did it, higherant of your good fortune—keep to yourself, sur, all you seemed to wish to keep from me!—let me be no impeachment in your way."

" My beloved Hannathina!" said Tim, " you wrong me most cruel; my good fortune is nothing unless shared with thee! But I know from books woman's nature is himpatient, and so I meant to 'ide hall this till measter were married! I loves my measter, because he is not only a harristocrack, but a harristocrack of hintelleck, and, like many such, he's sure to be composed upon by the world. I cannot forsake him till he changes his condition-then he'll have a nat'ral pertector; but, so far I've been a sacrifying myself to him: and now, Han, listen to the adwantages I expect to reap by remaining in a sitiation which some might think 'rogatory to a hair presumptuous to two hundred a year; but fust, I stays to purtect my measter, and next to instruct myself-for when measter comes fresh from that fountain-'ead of all hedication, the Miss Heldertons, he lets fall

pearls of hintelleck, and that, Han, not afore a swine. I do believe I've learnt more from his practisings than many young gentlemen learn all the time the're at school and college!"

"Very well, Mr. Ibbet! if your hedication is more to you than me, pray folly it up; I have many to choose from, sur, and I despise any man, rich or poor, young or hold, who puts any thing in competitorship with the possession of my 'and and 'art;" and she withdrew her hand with a jerk, and rose. "Farewell, Tim—Mr. Ibbet, I mean—don't go for to fancy I was in any hurry to be united to you! I've refused your betters, even in your present circumstances—youth, beauty, and hedication needn't go a begging. Perhaps, hare long, you'll be almost drove over in a coach by one who would have followied you in poverty, and maintained you by the henergy of her talons!"

"No, no, you shall not go till you have heard me, Mrs. Flounce: but for this discovery,

I meant, as I said, to have lived on with measter till he marries, and has some one to see after him. Else, in trying to save pence (as with that 'ere chimbley), he'll lose pounds and pounds-but once united to a woman of hintellect, I meant to leave him; for he preposes to have a large family, and, as I told him, I'm not a-going, as he hopes, to sink into a nuss,-by my own henergies, I 'opes to become a hactor, and be in time no mean support of the nashunel drammur! My plan, then, when I received this letter, Hannettina, was to hoffer myself to you, as soon as measter's safe: then, with your janius and beauty, which would cut a figure on the stage, we might both become hactors, and, in time, have ris to be managers! But you upsets all my castles in the haireruel Hannettina!"

"Why, to be frank, Tim, I prefer a cottage on a heath—but I have good, nay, helegant 'omes, hoffered to me, sur. Farewell! may you find another lovier as true as I have been!" "Oh! no, no, 'ere on my knees I begs for a smile! Measter will marry afore another quarter—he has no time to lose. Nothing but finishing off his hedication for the sake of his hoff-spring purvents—but he can't wait. And I, too, I 'ope to be a father—why not, as well as he?—don't blush, dearest Hannettina—I, too, wish to be prepared to hedicate my progenitors—to helevate a 'ealthy and virtuous hoffspring for the State, which, as the 'Dispatch' says, is the 'noblest duty of man.' Let us, then, fix to marry this day three months; by then measter 'll be purtected and purvided for, and my haffairs will be harranged."

"And suppose he should not marry?" said the relenting Flounce.

"Not marry! why, he's over 'ead and hears in love"—(here Bab sighed, and turned away from Burridge, and Burridge looked bashful and conscious):—" all this hedication is for his wife and children. Not marry, Han! Pray don't cast no reflections on measter—

with his feelings, he must marry-else I'm deceived in him."

"Well, then," said Flounce, "I consent; and lest you should doubt my asperity, we will each write a promise to be united on this day three months! Draw one out, Tim, and I will prevail on myself to sign it! Oh, Tim!" she added, with a sudden burst of romance, "hobject of all 'opes, my 'art is thine!"

Here a servant's voice was heard, calling Flounce. — "My lady is returned," said Flounce; "I must flow away — but we will meet by moonlight, in the voodbine harbour, and exchange our wows."

Thus ended the eloquent colloquy between Flounce, whose romance-reading enabled her to cope, in fine words, at least, with the glowing oratory of Tim, fresh from the "Weekly Dispatch."

They are gone! Bab and Burridge watched them glide through the walk, hand-in-hand.

"Happy woman!" said Bab, as she took Burridge's arm. "Envied man!" growled Burridge, scuffling along, as if afraid of his own heart; and letting his arm hang loose, that he might not feel Bab's hand.

## CHAPTER XIX.

ALL returned in high spirits from their drive, except poor Jessica, who had been bored to death by the incessant boasting of Pris (addressed exclusively to her), for Lady Vernon, having seen Lord Stare quite engrossed by Aurelia, went off into a comfortable nap; little Egbert, too, fatigued with the unwonted excitement of the morning, laid his head on Jessica's lap, and followed her example. Alas! poor Jessica! Of all toadies, the boasting toady is the most intolerable! Dr. Osborne found this out, as he drove Lavy, in the pony-chair, along

"The green retreats,
At once the Monarch's and the Muses' seats :"

and often he wished himself at home, in his own arm-chair, composing a sermon against vanity, and its offspring—falsehood.

Marvel Brown and Mrs. Winter seemed enchanted with each other; and as for the little Tadpole, she was in a fever of joy. Marcus dear Marcus!—

" If ever a heart made bright amends
For the fatal faults of an erring head,"—

that heart is thine! He had determined that the poor little Hunchback should be able, in the dreary waste time is to a poor cripple, to look back on one bright oasis.

To please her, he had driven with a spirit and speed which any lady who had dreaded a fall would have shuddered at—then he had sung her his merriest college-songs, and told her the drollest stories, as he only could tell them! At Windsor he had met several of his brother officers. Some men would have shrunk from being seen with a little cripple on their arm: not so Marcus—the wild and singular fellow often gave the tone to his companions, but

never took theirs. His notice gave a sort of caste to any one his kind heart bade him patronise—but, patronise whom he would, he never lost caste. Passionate, and even rashly brave, few liked to provoke him to actual wrath; and irresistibly witty, when he chose, none liked to awaken his ridicule.

"Who the deuce is that diable boileuse, hopping through the Castle with Vernon?" asked Captain Loiter of Captain Drawler.

"Oh,-oh,-ah! by George, who is she?"

"By his devotion, an heiress, I presume. He's deucedly aux petits soins with her, and 'tisn't his way: he's deuced cool with women—is, by George! Other day, waltzing with that famous belle—what's her name?—the Clara—Colonel Hauton's daughter—after a turn or two, he said he was tired, and proposed sitting down. George! how she stared!—all the men dying to dance with her—capital—I'll try it some day!"

"Ah!-eh-hum-and did she? Sitting's better than waltzing, eh-"

"Did she?—yes! and tried to punish him by wanting this thing and that—a window opened—a door shut—an ice, and George knows what beside!"

"What a bore !—eh,—ah,—hum! Did he do it all?—couldn't refuse—what bores women are, eh——"

"Do it?—not he!—Capital! He pretended to be deaf—answered her à tort et à travers, put his hand to his ear, and talked of his infirmity. Well, the Clara,—a girl with wit, uncommon pretty, and quite the go,—sat there, refusing every one for three waltzes: the novelty of the thing won her. She's been desperately in love with him ever since. Told me, in hopes I'd tell him, how monstrously she admires him; and that Lady Hauton wants to know him; but she played me off last season—I hope all this he'll play her off. Ah! here they come! Oh, be sure, that crookback is a Crœsus; let's be introduced. After all, Vernon hasn't sense enough to marry for

money: but you and I, Drawler, we're men of the world—crooked as she is, she could set our affairs straight. Come, if she's the ready, I'll lend you a cool thousand, if I get her—and you, vice versa!"

And, with heads as empty as their purses, the captains—who, as far as intellect went, were not fit to be drummers—joined Vernon, and begged to be introduced. They sauntered with Vernon as long as they could, but the little Tadpole did not bestow any glances on their handsome but unmeaning faces, nor any smiles on their poor attempts at wit; while to Vernon's noble, animated face she raised her dazzling eyes, bright with enthusiastic admiration, and greeted with lively laughter all his quietly droll remarks.

At length, Loiter whispered to Drawler, that "Confound it, it was no go!"

Drawler replied, "Eh, — hum! — ah, by George, let's be off!" And so they sauntered away, leaving the Tadpole rejoiced at their departure, and Marcus, who had fathomed their surmises and consequent attentions to his little charge, highly amused at their discomfiture.

The dinner passed gaily off—champaign made the witty wittier, and gave animation where it could not supply wit. Bab and Jessica, divided by old Dr. Osborne, sat opposite Burridge, who, from principle, had abstained from handing Bab to dinner; and Jessy, to avoid him, had seized on Dr. Osborne.

Bab, flushed, crowned with flowers, excited by conquest and champaign, talked and laughed, and drew out Burridge's French with great adroitness. Seen through his spectacles, and across the tables, with his purblind eyes, she formed a splendid contrast to Jessica, — much taller, bolt upright, her broad shoulders displayed, and using considerable action in conversation,—in Burridge's opinion she quite eclipsed Jessica, who, pale, sad, downcast, her long golden ringlets unornamented, and her thoughts with those far away, scarcely spoke,

and, when she did speak, cared little whether she was heard or not.

" Poor Jess!" said Burridge to himself, "I must make up my mind soon. She is pining away-she who used to be the life and soul of everything: perhaps she sees that I can't keep my eyes off that splendid Bab. No wonder - constancy and virtue are so rare in man! What temptations beset one! Here I forced myself not to hand her in to dinner, that I might not be near her - my feelings towards her seem a sort of involuntary treason to Jess; and now, just opposite to her, in the full blaze of her charms,-I declare, it is worse still-but I wont look at her-it's too much for me!" He resolutely shunned Bab's sparkling eve for some time, but, as he did not shun the sparkling champaign too, Bab triumphed at last, and with every glass she seemed more lovely, till at last every charm seemed double. " Adieu, belle demoiselle! au revoir!" he said, as the ladies rose to depart.

- "At one time," said Marvel Brown, "I always left the dinner-table with the ladies."
- "What, when you came in with the dessert, I suppose?" said Burridge.
- "No," replied the wonder-maker, "then I never deserted—at twelve years old I drank my bottle; at fourteen I was a two-bottle man—
  - 'But now Childe Marvel is sore sick at heart, And from his fellow bacchanals would flee,' "

he added, with a tender gaze at Mrs. Winter; and, as he finished his quotation, the last white skirt disappeared through the dining-room door, and "Childe Marvel," in spite of his sick heart, did ample honour to the wines.

## CHAPTER XX.

Before the gentlemen joined them, the ladies had crowned themselves with garlands of natural flowers, and were taking tea in a room prepared for dancing. Jessica, not to appear singular, had twisted a wreath of white May in her beautiful hair; but her pale cheek gave her rather the air of the victim, than the priestess of the altar. Aurelia looked divinely handsome, crowned with pomegranate and double cherry blossoms; while all the Eldertons appeared with lilac and horse-chestnut rising in spires, and laburnum hanging its golden clusters down to their very shoulders.

"But, smiling there, Th' Acacia waves her yellow hair," said Marvel, approaching Bab, on his way to Mrs. Winter, who had only put a bunch of violets in her white and silver turban. "Ah! whom have we here?" he said, affecting surprise, as he sank on a settle in a window-recess beside her—

"A violet, by a mossy stone,

Half hidden from the eye;

Fair as a star, when only one

Is smiling in the sky!

I have still," he said, "a bunch of violets that I gathered in my infancy; they are fragrant as ever; and the first rhymes I was guilty of were addressed to them—a poet at five years old!"

"And a poetaster at five-and-twenty," growled Burridge, aside.

The malade imaginaire had had herself carried down to tea, but fancied herself too weak to stay, and had retired, attended by Pris, her new toady, to bed. Ere long, Pris returned: but occasionally, during the evening, with looks of ambassador-like mystery and importance, flitted

in and out, up and down, to administer a pill or draught, or that cordial to the mother's heart, some praise of Egbert's looks, and some accounts of how he was admired, and how gaily he was dancing.

"Mr. Burridge, I wish to speak to you," said Jessica, who had resolved, instead of writing, as he looked in high good-humour, to ask him to be as earnest as possible in securing the appointment for her uncle. But Burridge had taken champaign enough to forget his principle in following his inclination, and so, heedless of everything else, he made his way to the spot where Bab was standing. His want of self-command betrayed itself in his sidling up much closer to her than custom sanctions; and taking a long and deliberate gaze at her through his spectacles.

"How confoundedly handsome you do look to-night, Bab," he said, in an under-tone, "quite a young Bacchante! You'll dance with me, Bab, at first. What are these flowers?" and with his sacrilegious hand he touched a cluster of laburnum which hung on Bab's shoulder.

- "Excuse me, Mr. Burridge," said Pris, darting forward, and interposing her tall scraggy form, "what is your object in touching Miss Barbara Elderton's wreath?"
- "I thought that flower was falling," said-Burridge, in his terror, the King of Lies coming to his assistance.
- "In that case, I thank you, sir," said Pris, somewhat haughtily: "but if Miss Barbara's wreath requires adjusting, either myself, Miss Dorothea, or Miss Lavinia, are ready to assist her. Excuse me," she added, in a whisper, "but I stand in loco parentis to poor Bab; and with her, as with most girls, I fear, Il n'y a pas de rigueur complète sans aversion."
- "Miss Elderton, I respect Bab as much as I admire her."
- "Respect, sir, is the feeling the Miss Eldertons are most proud to inspire; and I hope Miss Barbara, in a girlish thirst for the admiration even of a man like you, will never forget what

is due to herself, to my poor dear papa Dr. Elderton, to poor dear Sir James our great uncle, poor dear Lord Rivers his intimate friend, my godfather the Duke of Pompempty——"

No one can tell where the list might have ended, had not the musicians struck up a waltz. Burridge, who during Pris's address had contented himself with gazing at a distance on the charms he had been so reproved for approaching, now hurried forward to ask Bab to waltz.

Marcus, too kind to urge the poor little Tadpole to expose herself by dancing, did all he
could to amuse her, sat down by her whenever
he could, and brought her piles of caricatures
to amuse her. Lord Stare, seeing her surrounded by them, put up his glass, and said to
Aurelia, "The Tadpole looking at caricatures!
tell me, fair one, will she see aught so ridiculous as herself?'pon honour, it's capital: little
humpy among the caricatures!—birds of a feather flock together."

"Oh! my lord, you are so severe."

"And you so divine! 'pon honour. Bravo! humpy 's looking at another humpy."

Meantime the waltz began. Giddy and excited as Burridge was, no less Amazonian a partner could have borne him safely through the mazes of the waltz: but Bab had strength and address, and they had practised by the hour at the Eldertons'.

The few who did not dance looked on between surprise and terror: never had Burridge been known to waltz before; but the alarm of the spectators was nothing to that of the waltzers, as with irresistible force Bab and Burridge whirled around. Marvel received a kick from Bab, which made him decide, as in a former case, that there was a great deal of the cart about the hoof; and Mrs. Winter's beautiful turban was knocked aside by Burridge's awkward elbow. Lord Stare was upset, and retired, with his hand to his cheek, to replace a false whisker, muttering curses as he went. Marcus, who was waltzing with Jessy, and who

was peculiarly agile, delighted in braving and escaping the danger; and little Egbert and Pris did the same. The other couples left them considerable space; and Burridge's début was as triumphant as he or Bab could have wished it.

However, he did not feel safe with any partners but the Eldertons, and he danced so much with Bab, that at last Pris, who had had no cavalier but Egbert, went up, and said, "Mr. Burridge, this is much too pointed; Miss Barbara must not dance this dance with you; it is against all etiquette,—in your situation, particularly."

"Why, I ought to ask Jess, of course; but I don't feel safe with any ladies but some of you,—we all do the same step."

"In that case, I will take a turn with you: Mr. Marcus Vernon, you are disengaged, allow me to introduce Miss Barbara Elderton."

And Marcus, who thought it would be good fun to have a race with Pris and Burridge, and drive them fairly out of the field, set off with the indefatigable Bab. Long was the trial, and many the shocks; but Bab was too cunning to triumph in a lutte with Burridge; and to Marcus's great indignation, she sank on a seat.

Refreshments, and a little music, were proposed. Marvel Brown sang his impromptu, "I go where glory waits me!" Mrs. Winter an impassioned Italian bravura; Marcus a comic, Lord Stare a hunting song; Pris played a "capriccio" of her own, and her three sisters screamed a trio. Marcus had just proposed another waltz, when Jessica, who had hitherto accompanied every body with great taste and patience, was whispered to by Bab: she immediately rose; Bab sat down, played a dashing prelude, and softly glided into the air of "I'd be a butterfly." Ere long, to the surprise of every one, a squeak issued from the curtain of a window close to which the pianoforte was placed.

Pushing aside the pink drapery behind which he had lurked in ambush, awaiting his turn, Burridge, flushed, and his eyes glaring, peeped like a satyr through a rose-bush, went valiantly through "I'd be a butterfly" in his most piercing falsetto, without once stopping; and then Bab, having adroitly glided off into "I've been roaming," he obliged the company with that elaborate air, sparing them nor trill, roulade, or turn. At its close his voice failed him, or he would not have ended there.

Marcus, to conceal the ill-repressed convulsions of laughter of all around, set the example of applauding vehemently; and never did Tamburini or Lablache bow to an entranced audience with more self-sufficiency than did Burridge, as he turned to make some remarks to quiet old Dr. Osborne (a great connoisseur) on science, tone, colour, and breadth, and to prove that his singing was distinguished for all those qualities.

The dancing now recommenced; and as day had dawned, a last galop was proposed. Burridge, strong in his late triumphs, felt secure against defeat, and resolved to honour Jessica, by dancing the closing galop with her; but as she had already set off with Marcus, he, not to compromise Bab, pompously invited Aurelia. A look from her mother, warning her not to offend Burridge, induced her to accede.

Poor Aurelia! she hated to waltz with Burridge, for to her, appearance was every thing; but till she commenced, she had no actual fear, because she had seen him get on so safely with Bab; but, had she suddenly found herself in the hug of a dancing bear, scarcely could her terror have been greater! Poor Aurelia! a few such minutes of intense agony cancel hours, nay days of vain frivolity! On she went, pale, aghast, a faint shriek occasionally escaping her lips, as she was suddenly whirled against some impeding object, or as suddenly whirled away from it. Burridge, accustomed to the Herculean Bab, leant much of his weight on the delicate Aurelia; she tried to stop, but the effort ended in her being hurled more rapidly along. At length, Lord Stare, still remembering his fall with resentment, watched an opportunity, when he could, as he thought, upset Burridge with safety to himself. Burridge clung, but, alas!

met to Bab: he lost his balance, and fell against Lord Stare. A curl of his wig caught in his lurdship's shirt-pin, and as he raised his head the wig came off. At the same moment, six little streams of blood spouted forth, and played upon his lordship's embroidered white satin waistcoat. Lord Stare pushed Burridge off; his wig still hanging to his own button. All crowded round them. His lordship and Burridge, in violent rage, were both swearing; the former (who though a spendthrift in large things was a niggard in small) having meant the waistcoat to last him the season, and Burridge fired by the pain of the leech-holes and the loss of his wig. At this moment Bab rushed forward, darted like a tigress at his lordship, seized the wig, and presented it to Burridge.

"What infernal disease has he got in his head?" said Lord Stare, examining his waistcoat: "is it catching?"

"It would be a good thing for you, my lord," said Tim, who had come in with other

footmen to hand refreshments round, "if what measter has in his head were catching."

- "What do you mean, you insolent dog?"
- "Mean!" said Tim, who, being tipsy, felt himself as great as a king, particularly with the novel sense of his good fortunes fresh upon him: "I mean knowledge and hintelleck—that's what he's got in his head; and if that were catching, as I said afore, it would be a good think for you, my Lord. You may be a harristocrack, my Lord, but my measter's not only a harristocrack, but a harristocrack of hintelleck."
- "Will you order your servant out?" said Lord Stare, pale with passion, to Lady Vernon, "else I shall be compelled to call mine to kick him out."
- "My Lord!" said Lady Vernon, apologetically, "excuse him—he is, I fear, not a little intoxicated; one cannot restrict servants on an occasion like this: he is Mr. Burridge's servant. Leave the room, Tim!"
  - "I'm a going, my lady; but first let me

explain,—that that 'ere bleeding in master's 'ead, aint nothing but the leeches."

"Leeches! who applied leeches?" asked Marcus, who had made room for the little Tadpole to see what he called the sport. "Who applied leeches, Tim?"

"They applied themselves, sur; and in that they showed more sense nor many Christians, who never apply themselves to nothing. When master fell with Miss Bab in that 'ere 'orrid recepacle, while Miss Bab fainted away, as ladies nat'ral do when they're safe, and master was took up with her sitiation, them leeches got out of the pond, their nat'ral helement, to dig their cruel fangs in measter's 'ead. If I've offended, my Lord, I 'umbly axes 'is pardon, which is all I can do; for all men is hequal, haccording to natur and imitable justis, both he as works and he as sits at 'ome hidle a running of him down. All I said was in measter's defence; who, so far from 'aving anything the matter with his 'ead, 'as a 'ead philosophy might henvy, and one I washes hevery day, and rubs till it shines."

Tim's harangue had so amused the company -even Lord Stare—that he had been allowed to proceed. As the early sun of May was now peeping through the shutters, and Burridge and Lord Stare were only fit for their own apartments, the party broke up. Aurelia, who knew her bloom could, as Marvel assured her, even "after dancing, dare the dawn," allowed him to open a shutter, and proved the truth of his assertion. Mrs. Winter, doubtful about hers, glided away. Burridge wrung Bab's hand, in gratitude for her rescue of his wig, and said, "Well, Bab, that accident was unlucky: but, before it occurred, my triumph was complete. I was never in such good voice and step in my life!" and then he scuffled off, under the escort of Tim.

The little Tadpole thanked Marcus for all his kindness, with tears in her eyes, and carried away in her bosom (to be preserved, while

#### THE MARRYING MAN.

her. Lady Tadpole thanked Lady Vernon for a " ly pleasant day," and set off in a phaeand pair. Soon no one was up in Vernon but the sun: and thus closed this event-

END OF VOL. II.

## THE MARRYING MAN.



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#### THE

## MARRYING MAN.

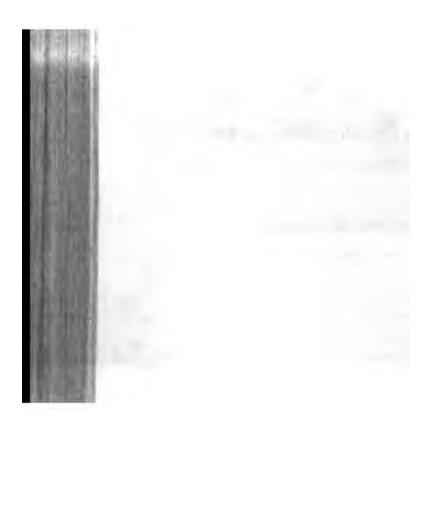
## A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "COUSIN GEOFFREY."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

# LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET. 1841.



## THE

## MARRYING MAN.

## CHAPTER I.

THE next day Lord Stare returned to town. Lady Vernon pressed him much to stay; but he was somewhat of a sporting character, and had a large bet depending on a walking match; and what, to such as him, are all the charms of beauty, when there is a wager in the case?

The Countess of Mandeville, too, departed, propped up by pillows, wrapped in shawls and cloaks, and with a foot-warmer, although every one else found the weather genial in the extreme. To the great delight of the other Eldertons, she carried off Pris, who was to spend

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three months with her; after which time, she was to be replaced by another Elderton.

Many were poor Elder's misgivings: her precautions (particularly to Bab), and her prognostics of evil and ruin to the house of Elderton. As the Countess had a frequent supply of medicines from London, Elder, to avoid the expense of postage, desired by every such opportunity to hear from the girls. She pompously took Burridge apart, to remind him, that, although she hoped he would continue to spend his mornings at her house, as usual; in her absence, evening visits must be avoided. (the morning visits brought in a guinea a week, and the evening ones caused a small outlay, for tea, white sugar, and cakes.) She then solemnly confided all the girls, but Bab particularly, to his honour and brotherly protection; and religiously did he, as he wrung Elder's hand, register an inward vow to protect Bab from all the world, but, above all, from himself.

Marvel Brown had the honour of driving

Mrs. Winter back to the Hermitage. Lady Vernon, after Lord Stare's departure, had no wish to bury herself and Aurelia in the stupid country, at the very height of the London season; she therefore proposed, as Jessica was far from well, and thought the country air would benefit her, that she should stay a short time at Vernon Hall; and as there was a fancy ball that week, to which they were all engaged, and at which Aurelia's dress would be the more sumptuous if she had none to provide for Jessica, she became quite eager to promote the poor girl's stay.

Jessica, who longed for solitude, which is as a balm to the wounded spirit, felt quite grateful for a solicitude she did not fathom. A few days would restore her; and the old house-keeper, who had seen better days, would be a companion and a chaperon; besides, she would never go beyond the grounds: and so that point was settled. Lady Vernon then reminded her of the necessity of renewing he application to Burridge. "Let me be able t

tell your uncle you have done so," she said, "else I know he will forthwith send for you back to town." And Jessica, sick at heart, prepared to fulfil her odious task.

Burridge, of course, could not stay at the hall after Lady Vernon was gone; but, fortunately, he had no wish to do so.

He had decided that, ere long, justice to Jessica would compel him to become a Benedict: he had resolved that very day to make the proposal, which he considered (so sure was he of her affections) as a mere form. He had planned it all. He meant to put off the marriage for three, or, if possible, four months, and during that time to devote himself assiduously to perfecting his education at the Eldertons'. " When once married," he said to himself, "I will never give Jessica a pang, for I will never see Bab again; but really, till I am married, I think it would be overstrained virtue to give up her friendship, poor girl! Her only fault is - why conceal it from myself? - that she is in love with me. Well, perhaps that will

subside into friendship; at any rate, I promised her to go on with my lessons. Poor Bab! she said she couldn't live on if I didn't; besides, I enjoy them so myself; and my progress is so wonderful. How applauded I was last night for my singing; and how I waltzed even Marcus, and Bab herself, down! Aurelia is a wretched waltzer; but I was getting on with her, if it hadn't been for that confounded accident. To-morrow, at ten, I'll be at the Eldertons'. Let's see, it's now two-two to two in the morning is twelve hours; and from two to ten, eight more. Heigh ho! twelve and eight is twenty-twenty hours before my lessons! But then I shall go back to town in the post-chaise between Bab and Lavy, as Lady Vernon has offered to take Dolly-that will take up some of the time; and I can sleep eight or ten hours, and be half an hour before my time at the Eldertons'. I'll go and see where Bab is now."

But, as Burridge stumped along in search of Bab, Jessica came out in search of him. "Let us walk through the grounds, Mr. Burridge," she said, blushing, as she thought of the request she had to make.

Burridge, like most men, more under the influence of present than of absent charms, was rather pleased at the invitation; and, as he remarked her pretty hand trembling on his arm, the blush upon her cheek, the beauty of her hair, for she had no bonnet on, and the sylph-like figure displayed as the soft wind fluttered her light muslin dress, he said to himself, "She's a lovely creature, after all! I think I'll be married in two months, or, if she wishes it much, in one."

Almost unconsciously to herself, Jessica led the way through the thickest of the shrubbery. She fancied, shut out from all beside, her tongue would falter, her cheek blush less, in asking this favour again.

Burridge stole a glance at her, and wondered he had ever admired another. They came to a garden-bench; she sate down; he took a seat beside her; in a nervous spirit of procrastination, she gathered some honeysuckles that rose around it, and offered them to him: as she did so, for the first time raising the long dark lashes of her very blue eyes, her colour deepened. She faltered, "Mr. Burridge, I have something very particular to say to you."

"So I have to you, Jessy! I dare say, though we may have different ways of saying it, what we mean is much the same."

"Oh! I hope it is. Have you done anything about it then, dear, kind Mr. Burridge? How I have wronged you—I thought you so remiss, so lukewarm!"

"Did you?" said Burridge, taking her hand, and turning orange by way of a blush, as he remembered how well he deserved the reproach, "did ye though, Jess? well, perhaps you are right; the best of us are poor changeable creatures, led by our passions, and infirm of purpose. Can you forgive me, Jess? I've been so taken up of late."

"With Miss Bab Elderton," said Jessy, archly.

"Jealous, by Jove!" chuckled Burridge to himself, "and as frank, as plain-spoken, and as impassioned as Bab herself. Well, then, Jess, I don't want to make myself better than I am, particularly to you. I am but a man, with all a man's passions and weaknesses. Of late, I have been a little too much engrossed by Bab's charms"—(and he looked sheepish). "Yes, why even you, Jess, must own she is a fine girl, fine figure, fine eyes!"

Jessy burst into a fit of laughter, "A fine girl!" she repeated.

Burridge looked delighted; he attributed her genuine mirth at the idea of Bab's being a fine girl to jealousy, and a wish to disparage a rival. "Well, Jess," he said, "that's neither here nor there now; I'm cured of that folly."

Jessica, who was thoroughly kind-hearted, afraid her dissent from his opinion might have robbed poor Bab of a chance of being provided for, said, "If I do not consider Miss Bab exactly a fine girl, she is certainly a very accomplished woman, and I should think would make an excellent wife."

"Jess," said Burridge, "you are a noble creature! There's not another woman extant who would, under the circumstances, have proved herself as forgiving to me, or as just to Bab: but I shall not forget it; and I hope to put everything en train au plutôt."

"Oh! how shall I thank you?" said Jessy, extending her hand, "do not think me encroaching, but when do you think it can be?"

I'll say in a month, thought Burridge; I wish, now, I could say in a week—"I think, in a month, Jess: but, if you wish it, perhaps sooner."

"Wish it! how can I do otherwise than wish it? Oh! what comfort! what a blessing to all! what good news for poor Lucy! Heaven bless you, Mr. Burridge!"

"I am blest, Jessy, far more than such a weathercock as I've have been lately deserves."

"My uncle! my dear uncle! I must run in to write to him. Marcus will be able, with the cornetcy you so kindly got him, and the income he can now of course receive, to live free from debt. My uncle can go on living in his usual style: Aurelia will be provided for."

"Confound it, Jess! what do you mean? I shall have others to provide for, ere long. Do you think I'm going to make ducks and drakes of my income, to encourage Sir William and my lady in their shameful extravagance, to enable Marcus to live like a prince, and to provide for Aurelia?"

"No! but my uncle will be able to live in his accustomed style, when his income is so much improved."

"Improved! what, out of my fortune ?"

"Your fortune?"

"Yes, my fortune! I shall make a handsome settlement on you; and that you'll have the disposal of: but——"

"On me! what, out of my uncle's appointment?"

"Are you mad, Jess? on you, as my wife."

"Your wife!" and the whole absurd mis-

understanding flashed at once on Jessica's mind.

"Come, Jess," he said, trying to take her hand, "no pruding and young-lady airs now; I like your natural manner much better—of course you're glad to be married?"

"I see," said Jessica, withholding her hand,
there has been an absurd mistake; I have
been all this time alluding to the appointment
I asked you to try to get for my uncle."

"And I thought we were discussing our intended marriage, Jess. However, the ice is broken, and now let us have done with shilly-shallying; we've long been attached—let us fix the day."

" Attached! Mr. Burridge."

"Yes, Miss Jess; why you are not going to deny that, I suppose?"

"I am indeed going most decidedly to deny having ever dreamt of you for one moment, but as a friend."

"Come, this is too absurd, Miss Jessica Thornton! this is fine young-lady, romantic make-believe: but it doesn't suit a straightforward man of honour. I ask you, once for all, when you mean to realise my expectations, and become my wife ?"

"Never! sir," said Jessica, at last excited to anger; " and I should like to know on what you found expectations so monstrous?"

"Jess, I know women like to torment, and play off their lovers, at such a moment as this; and many a good husband has been lost by such coquetry. I ask you, plainly, are you in earnest? can you say, upon your honour, you never mean to become my wife?"

"Upon my most sacred word of honour, I not only never mean to become your wife, but I have no idea upon what you have built your hopes of so preposterous an union."

"Upon what, madam? have you the face to ask such a question? Upon your evident, but perhaps pretended, affection for me—upon your liking to be alone with me, and constantly contriving to see me tête-à-tête, thereby keeping me out of the way of Lucy, whom I have now good

reason to believe I might otherwise have captivated, and whom at one time I was disposed to admire,—on your corresponding with me, accepting my presents, and privately borrowing a large sum of me, which at the time you promised to save me in after-life. My allusions to our union you never silenced, and you have led me on in so unjustifiable a manner, that I am inclined to sue you for a breach of promise of marriage!"

"Sir!" said Jessica, "in vindicating myself, I fear I must wound your vanity. With regard to keeping Lucy out of your way, or contriving tête-à-têtes with you for myself, I can only say, that, although I appreciate your merits, my situation as a poor proteyée in my uncle's family has frequently compelled me to be visible when others chose to absent themselves; thus, when my aunt and cousins have been indisposed to see company, the duty of receiving their guests has fallen on me."

"Thank you, Miss Jess! Then you saw me by compulsion, I suppose?" with a derisive laugh. "At first I did; but ere long I learned to value your original mind, and your good heart; they excused to me the little foibles which spring from an innocent vanity; and, thinking that the disparity of our years formed our mutual protection, the poor protegée dreamt that she had found in you a friend!" (Here tears filled Jessica's eyes, and Burridge seemed moved). "Under this impression, I corresponded with you whenyou wished it; but how I could suspect you aimed at being considered as my lover, when you have often told me you would rather not hear from me than have postage to pay?"

"And yet I paid thirty guineas for your shawl—twelve pounds ten for your dress—six shillings for dainties on New Year's Day—and about five pounds in advertising the shawl, besides two guineas to the Macbotchers for bringing it back! I think, when all these sums are added to many other items I shall remember when I come to think of them—shoe-leather, coach and cab-hire, expenses on

your account in my own toilet, and a variety of sundries, besides a hundred pounds I lent, or, rather, gave you—the total, madam, would not make me appear a stingy lover! Besides that, for the last six months I have been paying a guinea a week for my improvement in accomplishments, with which I meant to enliven you, and to educate our offspring; and, besides that guinea, I have a quarterly accompt for soups, copy-books, French works, and the hire of an Astley Cooper-chair, a backboard, and a pair of dumb-bells, which are going on all this time, and which I imagined, at first, were to be a loan!"

At this climax, Jessica could not refrain from laughing; this highly incensed Burridge: "I will sue you, madam!" he said; "I am sure the circumstance of your privately borrowing a hundred pounds of me, would convict you in any court of justice!"

"Yes," said Jessica, bitterly, "of that greatest of crimes, in the eyes of the world—poverty! In saying I would save it till you were

repaid, I meant that, out of the little I could earn by the private sale of drawings and fancyworks, and the small sums my uncle gives me, I would yet repay you; and already, by private and nightly toil, and by denying myself every thing not absolutely needful, I have saved up twenty-five pounds of the sum you taunt me with. This some might blush to own, sir; but it is glory in my eyes, compared to the deep shame of being in your debt. Now, learn that that sum was not borrowed for myself, and I hope, ere long, it will be again among your hoards—on that wretched circumstance alone could you have built these hopes!"

" And the shawl, madam?"

"The shawl I will return to you—it is quite uninjured: as the other articles are not so, it would be an insult to offer them to you again; but you may be sure, that, if you feel any regret at having given them, I feel a tenfold one at having accepted them!"

" And what do you think the world will say

to all this, Miss Jessica,—the world, which has constantly remarked on my attentions to you, and your acceptance of my addresses?"

" Nay, sir, the world-by which I suppose you mean the little circle I move in-has seen no such thing! It will certainly acquit me. It has seen you, in my presence even, entirely devoted to another. Why, you owned but now, that the charms of Miss Bab Elderton had turned your head! Oh, Mr. Burridge! that must be true, else never could a man of your talents, and real goodness, add thus to the trials of such a step-child of Fortune as I have been. But listen: were you all I could love and revere-were you the man I would select from the congregated world as my husband-were you suited to me in years, heart, and mind-yet had you (considering yourself engaged to me, and my happiness in your power,) trifled with it and me, by devoting yourself, in my presence, to another, as you have done of late to Miss Barbara Elderton-I would never bind myself to one so inconstant of

heart, and variable of purpose! Had I found in you, in all other respects, the realisation of my ideal—I would have renounced you for ever!

"Well, madam, I suppose it is my duty to tell you, that, but for my prior claims and pretensions, Captain Delamere, perhaps—this fine piece of perfection you describe—would have proposed to you."

"What, what did you say?" cried Jessica, rising almost with a shriek, and then sinking back—the pallor of death on her face.

"That he called upon me to know the truth of the report of my engagement to you, and, having heard a plain statement of my reasons for looking upon you as my future wife, he renounced you at once. You see how a man of honour judged the case. Come, Jess, it has gone too far—even if you asked him, he would not marry you now! Don't let a silly jealousy of Bab darken your prospects. After we're married, I'll never see her again. Come, the best lovers don't make the best husbands,

Jessy, and, vice versa. There, I'll do all I can about the appointment for your uncle,—and I can do much. If my fancy has wandered a little, my heart has been ever constant. I'll settle half my fortune on you and your children—listen to me, Jess!"

But Jessica's heart was far away. Delamere would have proposed to her! Delamere had loved her! Joy!—then came deep, deep shame! Burridge's revelations had induced him to renounce her! He had told him she had borrowed money privately of him, and it was true—and she could not deny it.

"Come, Jess—you are relenting!" and he tried to take her hand.

She snatched it away. "Mr. Burridge," she said, "I am your friend, in spite of the deadly wrong you have done me; but I would perish sooner than be your wife!" So saying, she rose, hastened through the shrubberies, and across the lawn. In her own room, her mingled anguish and joy found vent in a passionate

burse of tears. Meanwhile, Burridge remained in the bower with looks aghast.

"The deadly wrong I've done her! She means, in my attentions to Bab. Poor soul ! I am a good deal to blame! Confound my susceptible heart—that I cannot, though attached to the levellest creature on earth, sit by a fine woman, like Bab, without being enamoured! Oh, well, it will all come right: it's only a fit of jealousy | I must be more circumspect, and more devoted to her. How very beautiful she is when she's animated! I had no idea she had so much spirit. I'll do all I can to please her; I'll go at once to my cousin for her uncle, and urge on that affair: I'll be quite aux petits soins. If she were not desperately in love with me, she'd never have made such a row! Oh, she doesn't mean to give me up! Besides, she could never make up her mind to part with that shawl! Oh, Jacob, Jacob, let this be a lesson to you!" So saying, he went in to lunch, when traces of tears on Jessica's cheeks confirmed all his suspicions.

" I shall do my utmost with my cousin, Lord —, about the appointment for Sir William, Jessy," he said, in taking leave; and then he set off for town, wedged, in a post-chaise, between Bab and Lavy.

## CHAPTER II.

WHEN Lady Vernon returned to town, she found Sir William was gone to Brighton for his health; there was therefore no one to recal poor Jessy from her quiet retreat; and Aurelia and her mother gave themselves up to the allengrossing dissipation which London offers at a certain season, to those in a certain set.

The beautiful Miss Vernon produced a great sensation, and some offers of marriage were made her by middle-aged men of good income, but they only increased the pride and inflamed the ambition of both mother and daughter: they thought that such would always form a corps de reserve to fall back upon, in case nothing more brilliant offered. Aurelia hoped Lord Stare would yet propose; and Lady Vernon trusted her daughter would remain free till Delamere's return. The fame of her beauty, she felt sure, would reach him through the fashionable papers at Paris, and remind him that this all-triumphant, all-idolised being, was at heart his own.

Aurelia now rose only in time to canter with envious belles and admiring beaux through the park, then to dress for a dinner-party, to return at ten, and go fairly to bed for two hours; and when refreshed by sleep, and revived by green tea, to make her midnight-toilet, and fly from ball to ball, till Aurora peeped forth, with her rosy smile, to frighten away the pale, haggard daughters of fashion to their morning rest. Of course, the bills of milliners and mantua-makers were growing very long, but a good match would set all to rights.

Meanwhile, Burridge pursued his studies at the Eldertons', again too much under the influence of Bab's charms. Marcus, to whom Jessica had revealed the hopes he had built on her borrowing the hundred pounds of him, had been enabled, by a fortunate bet, to send her the money. This, with the shawl, she had returned to him.

It must be owned that he was rather startled: but as he had just begun the difficult song of "The Sea" with Bab—and, moreover, having finished "Picciola," had persuaded that too yielding maiden to let him commence "Corinne" with her—as a new step engrossed much of his time—and Bab had hired him a reclining board for his figure—there was not much room in his heart for that sort of melancholy morbid love, who will never consent to dwell where industry resides, but requires the whole range of heart, soul, and mind.

"Well," he said to himself, "this is nothing but pride and jealousy in Jess! What a sweet temper Bab has! how she went about to get me this reclining board, so cheap! and when she couldn't get one long enough, how she contrived and bargained to have it lengthened! Well, I shall take better care of the shawl than Miss Jess would,—losing the elegant thing, as she did once! and she can have it back when we're married; and as for the money, I meant her to keep it; but it'll do for the wedding tour; so it'll all be spent on her pleasures.— She's piqued at my not writing—ah! well, when she sees my figure now, and my last new steps, besides hearing me sing 'The Sea,' she'll come round; and, if she doesn't, why I must—marry Bab. I declare her devotion deserves it. Miss Jessy's note is rather impertinent: it seems odd enough when I compare it with Bab's last. How delicately cold and dainty!—how formally inclosed!

## " DEAR SIR,

"The person for whose distresses I borrowed the accompanying sum, has repaid it; I have therefore the pleasing task of returning it, with many thanks. The shawl too, which (together with the money) caused so strange a misconception, I am delighted to restore, uninjured. Trusting that we shall always meet as friends, and that, when you can, you will explain to Captain Delamere that it was to save a friend from ruin that I applied to you, and that that friend has repaid you,

" I remain, dear sir,

"Your obliged and faithful servant,

"Jessica Thornton.

"Now, let's see poor Bab's warm-hearted effusion. What a fine bold hand! written on the back of my last French dicté.

> "DEAREST, DEAREST OF DEAR PUPILS, AND FRIEND OF MY SOUL!

"As Tim is come to know about the reclining-board, in a great hurry I write a line to tell you, that ever since you left me Dolly and I have been flying from one broker's and carpenter's to another to get the board lengthened enough for your dear stately form. I am come in, pupil dear! so very tired and warm, that I could not rouse myself for anything but to write to you. Doll is in the sulks, for we

lost our dinner; and Doll does not feel that sort of friendship on which the heart feeds, while the soul is, as it were, intoxicated by it! I used often to feel much appetite: since I knew you, Jacob, I have never been hungry. A thought has flitted across my mind: Lavy and Doll have several times, through our dear rambles, come in to cold dinners; once, through our actual absence, the cat got at the ham; and once, in that absence of mind too common to me since I have known you, Jacob, I put the cheese in a closet where rats and mice held a high festival over it. Suppose you, in order to conciliate them, were to send a Cheshire cheese and a ham; Doll, who has a good appetite, would be pleased, perhaps. We must keep her in a good humour, else she will make mischief with Pris about our walking in Jenkinson's gardens: besides, elder sisters are so jealous! Lavy, too, grumbles at walking so much, and so often; poor thing! she is weakly. I think, my own pupil, if you ordered a dozen of old port, and another of good sherry, to be

sent here, they might strengthen her; for, alas! we cannot go without them both; and if they are cross, they can keep close to us, and thus prevent our dear interchange of friendly thought; besides objecting, in their spite, to my taking your arm. I cannot give up walking with you, that's por. To them I leave the pleasure of feeding on coarser fare- the feast of reason and the flow of soul' for me. Bring back this dicté; you know I love to keep all you write! be early to-morrow, and send the things for Doll and Lavy to-night-they have been so spiteful-talking so at me about the imprudence of friendship between a fine girl and a fascinating man. I told them, they were as censorious as two old maids. Oh! I was followed home by such a dashing beau! they say he is handsome-I wish I could think any one handsome, but my naughty, kind, dear, clever, good pupil! Alas! while my head has taught, my heart, I fear, has learnt. Yet I'm only your best friend,

" POOR BAB.

" Poor, dear, warm-hearted Bab! No wonder they are jealous of her youth and beauty. From what she hinted to me, Lavy's ten years her senior. Well, by this time they've got the ham, the cheese, and the wine. Lost her dinner, poor dear! and seems quite pleased about it! Who is it, I wonder, that followed her home? some wild fashionable roue, some titled seducer, perhaps: but Pris confided her, as it were, to me; and if I see anything of him, I shall take him to task-following the poor girl home indeed! Heigh ho! I've had twelve and sixpence to pay for the cheese, ten shillings for the ham-that's one pound two; and the wine -(as for old port and good sherry, as it's only for Lavy, that is out of the question; if it had been for Bab, it would have been different) the port - let's see - from that advertising man, ' fine fruity port twenty-six shillings the dozen, old brown sherry twenty-eight shillings,'-that would have been ruinous; but 'excellent Cape Madeira at eighteen shillings the dozen' (and that's a shameful price!) is more wholesome: twenty-six and eighteen are two pounds four—two pounds four and one pound two are three pounds six—three pounds six! why, I might have been educated for nearly a month for it. I declare, for the sake of economy, I must get married soon! Dear Bab! she cannot bear the idea of giving up our walks! Doll and Lavy are very greedy.—Well, I mustn't dawdle here. Tim! Tim!" he cried, raising his head from the board on which he had been soliloquising.

"Yes, sur!"

"Come, and practise the mazurka with me."

"Yes, sur; but you want five minutes yet to half an hour on your reclining board," said Tim, who had contrived an humble imitation for his own figure, in the next room, and was musing on Hannethina.

"Well, in five minutes bring me my pumps, and my flannel-jacket."

In five minutes Tim brought them.

"You took the ham, the cheese, and the

wine, Tim, to the Miss Eldertons'—did you see any of them?"

"I seed them all, sur; they all put their talented wenerable heads out of the winder; and when they see me, with the cheese-boy, the 'am-boy, and the man along of the wine, they comed down, post-haste, to tell me to look after them all, and see the things safe in, and the men safe off."

"Did they seem pleased?"

"Yes, sur, at fust they seemed alighted; but then Miss Bab, a counting the wine, thought a bottle was missing, and had a great row with the man, but when it come to be counted again, it proved to be all right."

"Ah!" said Burridge, almost to himself, "I am glad she looks into things."

"Oh, that she do, sur, and dives into 'em, too; for afore I went, she tasted the 'am, the cheese, and the wine; and she told me to tell you, sur, they was fust-rate, and Miss Dorothea and Miss Lavinia Helderton was most deeply obliged; and that from half-past seven to

half-past eight she and Miss Lavy, as it was such a fine evening, would walk in the gardens."

- "Confound it! Why did you not tell me that before—it's now nine!"
  - " I know it is, sur."
- "You scoundrel! Why didn't you tell me, that I might join them?"
  - " I did it for the best, sur!"
- "What do you mean? They'll think I've broken an engagement with them."
- "That would be better, sur," said Tim firmly, "than breaking one with yourself and your honour!"
- "What do you mean, Tim?" said Burridge, quakingly.
- "In the first place, sur, from half-past seven to eight was one of the precious, valuable halfhours which, in that hexcellent division of your time, you vowed to give to your French; and from eight to half-past eight, you said, you'd himprove your shape, by lying on that 'ere hexcellent board. Time, sur, so nobly devoted,

should never be throwed away meandering for pleasures, particularly by you, sur. Hintelleck's a fine thing—but moral wirtue is a finer. I likes to see you, sur, improving your hintelleck at the Miss Heldertons' of mornings, but I don't like to see you (having winned away Miss Jessica's affections), and actual a-keeping company with her now, even happearing to gallivant along of another! And what I preaches I practises, and will while I exhales the hair. Never will I purmote, but to the utmost pervent, the downfall of a harristocrack of hintelleck! And now I 'umbly axes your pardon, sur."

The stern virtue of the servant awed the somewhat vacillating master; he heard Tim out with a crest-fallen air; and then rising from the board, he said, "You are a good conscientious fellow, Tim — but you do not know all I have to combat — Tim, let me tell you a secret: I'm the most susceptible of men! My passions are my curse — my heart and soul are of fire—I am the very slave of beauty!"

"Measter, don't say so; that's being a slave of the Evil One—he comes in many shapes, but most in that of woman kind; but if I gived way, sur, I should be as bad as you! But I mean to marry honourable, ere long, and the sooner you does the same the better."

"You are right, Tim; and now come and practise the mazurka."

"Yes, sur. Oh, sur, what splendid hexercise this 'ere macjerker is!"

## CHAPTER III.

WHILE Aurelia was injuring her health and impairing her beauty by perpetual dissipation, Jessica, in the quiet and blossoming solitude of the lovely country, and the peace of mind which sprang from the hope that Burridge would justify her to Delamere, was fast recovering her spirits and her bloom.

A vessel, which had met that in which Edward Seymour and his young bride had sailed, had brought the most rapturous accounts from the new-married pair—they were on the wide waters, it is true, but the moon above them was still the honey-moon, and their hopes seemed buoyant as the waves that bore them on. They were beginning the "Voyage of Life," and seemed to realise the description given by a noble-minded, witty, and most kindly Poet, where he says,

" I wish I could as merry be As when I set out this world to see. Like a boat fill'd with good company On some gay voyage sent-There Youth spread forth the broad white sail, Sure of fair weather and full gale. Confiding life would never fail, Nor time be ever spent; And Fancy whistled for the wind ; And if e'en Memory look'd behind, 'Twas but some friendly sight to find, And gladsome wave her hand; And Hope kept whispering in Youth's ear, To spread more sail, and never fear: For the same sky would still be clear Until they reached the land !!"

All the first stanzas of this song, full of mirth and pathos, applied to them; and we will not anticipate for them that time which must come for all, when, though

And laugh'd at dangers as untrue;
Yet the dense sky tempestuous grew,
And sobbing south winds rose—
And Prudence told him all she fear'd;

But Youth awhile his messmates cheer'd,
Until at length he disappear'd,
Though none knew how he went;
Joy hung his head, and Mirth grew dull,
And Memory, with her soft eyes full,
Backward her glance still bent."

For the rest of this exquisite song, which our limits prevent our giving at length, we refer the reader to "The Desultory Man;" and proceed to tell how rapidly events of importance, which, like misfortunes, ever love a crowd, are succeeding each other in the Vernon family.

What a pity that the London season should be the country season too! That the time when the Queen holds her gayest, her most splendid drawing-rooms, in the palace, is that when nature holds gayer still, and more splendid still, in forest, field, and garden.

While the new beauties in town display themselves to the dandies of the season, the roses unveil their sweet faces to those dandies of nature's court—the many-coloured butterflies. While the first singers of the day give their expensive concerts in close, heated rooms, the nightingale, that greater songster still, gives his gratis among fragrant shrubs, tall trees, in haunts carpeted with velvet and flowers, and lighted by that silvery flame which God sent to light the night! Yes, while fashion's daughters give their ruinous festivals in town, the birds, the breezes, the flowers, give theirs in the sweet country; and all that we need pay for this perpetual fête is a thanksgiving to Him who made all things, and saw that they were good, and who has ordained that we should enjoy them.

Marcus's regiment was suddenly ordered abroad, just as he, with true English perversion, was preferring early summer in town to early summer in the country; and, by a fortunate chance, the place he was ordered to was that to which the Seymours were bound. Aurelia, in leaving a very crowded ball, on a damp, rainy morning, had caught a severe cold, which ended in an alarming inflammation of the lungs; and the same paper which announced to Delamere, then at Constance, that

Marcus was ordered abroad, announced, too, that the beautiful Miss Vernon lay without hope of recovery at her father's mansion in Berkeley-square. At the same time, Mrs. Winter, who seemed, for some unrevealed reason, very anxious to see him united to Aurelia, wrote him a letter, in which she artfully hinted, that the lovely and too faithful girl was falling a sacrifice to those feelings she had so long and vainly struggled with.

"I have seen her, Osmond," she said, "I have seen the faint tinge come to her pallid cheek at an accidental allusion to you. Her mother is frantic; she believes there is no hope: but I have great faith in the power of the lover's presence over a heart breaking for love.

"Miss Jessica is in the country, in the rudest health. By her own wish, she staid there all the season. I believe, she thought London, and late hours, were impairing her bloom. Well, poor thing! her face is her fortune. I do not know whom she is aiming at,

now Burridge does not seem to come forward; indeed, I believe that 'marrying man' is desperately in love with Bab Elderton. Marcus is ordered abroad. I fancy Lady Clara Hauton, the daughter of his colonel, who is resolved to go out with her dear papa, is desperately in love with our young cornet, and is at last snaring her prey. Jessica, I believe, is flirting with the rector and the curate; the rector is richthe curate, I hear, handsome-so, probably, she will marry the rector, old Dr. Osborne; they say, he often visits her. Lady Vernon will not let her know of her cousin's illness-she seems to think Jessica would only worry the poor sufferer. The countess is much as usual; only trying vapour baths, which seem to add to the vapours she had before. I think, on the receipt of this, you will fly to the sick-oh! I hope not the death-bed, of the loveliest and fondest of girls. Do not for worlds let it be known I have written. May my prayers for your fate be heard.

"Your friend,

" EVELEEN WINTER."

Dear, disinterested Eveleen! thought Delamere; a woman one has rejected, to be so anxious to spare one a remorse. Aurelia dying! that Hebe of health and beauty—that gifted creature perishing, and for me—forbid it, heaven!

Night and day did Captain Delamere travel, hurried on by a real anxiety from an imaginary cause. In less than a week from the receipt of Mrs. Winter's letter, he was in London.

## CHAPTER IV.

JESSICA was taking an early morning walk through the sweet shrubberies of Vernon Hall, her cheek all bloom, and her heart all hope, for Marcus had promised her, himself, to take an opportunity of letting Delamere know, that it was to save him from a prison she had sacrificed all her feelings, and borrowed money of Burridge; and this, not as if she knew or wished it, but as a casual remark. She saw a servant coming towards her with a letter—a letter—Poor dependent! she always trembled when she saw a letter for her, for who was likely to write kindly to her? Lucy and Marcus she had very lately heard from—some tor-

menting epistle from old Burridge, perhapsno; from her aunt! Nothing pleasant was likely to come from her. She opened it, with sickening dread of being wounded and insulted, and read, with surprise—

## " DEAREST JESSICA,

"Your cousin has been very dangerously ill, but is now recovering. I did not send for you, because I feared the closeness of a sick room might counteract the benefit you have received from the Vernon breezes. I am sure you will be glad to hear that Captain Delamere is engaged to Aurelia! I believe he has long been attached to her, and she to him: he went abroad, I fancy, in a fit of jealousy of Lord Stare; and she, with true female pride, concealed her feelings even from me, till the protracted struggle brought her almost to the grave. Seeing, in a London paper, that the belle of the season, the beautiful Miss Vernon, lay dangerously ill, he has travelled hither with true love's speed; arrived, pale and ill, was received by her in my dressing-room, wrapped in shawls, but looking, as he said, more 'divinely fair' than ever-poor child! she fainted, and he was almost frantic. However, when she recovered, he was bending over her; and then there was a most touching scene, which ended in their solemn engagement. She is now fast recovering her strength, and Dr. H. orders her into the country as soon as possible. Meantime, Delamere reads to her, watches her, and has brought his guitar to her couch. I hear him now singing to her, at her request, that merry song, "I have roam'd through every quarter," which it seems he composed for her. How I wish you were here! I never saw such devotion! I have just looked round from my writing. How very beautiful she is - no wonder he adores her! She has got on a little lace cap, a veil, and a white wrapper, with some flowers he has just brought her in her bosom, her beautiful blue eyes half full of tears, and raised to his. I am sure, if I were not here, he would be at her feet: they are whispering, and she blushes-how I wish you could see them!

"In three days, we shall all be at Vernon Hall. Will you see, my love, that all is readythe chintz bed-room and dressing-room-for Osmond: and perhaps you will (with your pretty taste) trick them out with a few flowers. Let there be a fire in Aurelia's room, if it is not very hot weather. I am well pleased with the match; for though she might have done better (she has had such offers !) in a worldly point of view, yet, for a love match, it is wonderful. Poor Marcus's regiment is ordered abroad, luckily, though, to -; the Seymours will take care of him. I have a great favour to ask of you, ere long, dearest; mais cela ne presse pas. Aurelia and Osmond beg to be most affectionately remembered. Your uncle is still at Brighton.

" Ever, dear Jessy,

"Your affectionate aunt,

"A. VERNON."

What large and scalding drops, wrung from the storm within, fell upon this cruelly artful letter. How every word had been dagger-like polished and sharpened, that it might not fail to stab! But Jessica saw not that: it seemed to her merely a statement of facts; and for her, life was now a sunless waste! The substance was true—they had met. Aurelia, weak from recent suffering, had fainted. Delamere attributing this emotion to her love for him, had proposed, was accepted; and in three days they were to be at Vernon Hall.

Aurelia was, if possible, lovelier than ever; and, in appearance, far more interesting. Delamere looked at her beauty, with surprise at its perfection, and wonder at his own comparative indifference: he tried to adore, but his thoughts wandered back to a fallen idol and a ruined shrine; and a soft face, with meekly earnest eyes, long golden locks, and changeful cheek, sometimes seemed to his fancy to watch with mournful beauty over him, even by the side of the exquisite Aurelia.

It was on the very day upon which Lady Vernon, with triumphant spite, had concected the barbarous letter to Jessica, that Aurelia, having expressed a wish for a Cape jasmin, Delamere, longing for solitude and fresh air, determined to walk to Jenkinson's nursery-gardens to get her one. It was about five in the afternoon, and, as it was a very hot day, the streets through which he passed were almost deserted. As he turned into the New Road. the gate of one of the little gardens before the houses suddenly opened within a few yards of him, and two men came out. A lady in white muslin, with long black ringlets, reopened the gate they had closed, put her head out, exclaimed, "Jacob! once more adieu! au revoir!" waved her handkerchief, flung him a peony, and ran away.

"Au revoir, behl demoiselle!" said a voice, and a face belonging to a huge gaunt form, which on turning round, Delamere recognised to be Burridge.

It was Burridge, just come from school, with several books and papers under his arm, and a large slate in his hands, and attended by Tim, who was carrying a back-board and a pair of stocks.

The peony had not been seen by Burridge, who had some difficulty in keeping his books, papers, and slate safe; and Delamere was surprised to see Tim, instead of picking it up, and presenting it to his master, trample it in the dust, and then kick it contemptuously into the gutter.

Delamere, like all people naturally of a humorous turn, was, even when out of spirits himself, struck by any indication of character in another; and he was amusing himself with an attempt at guessing why the flower, tossed so playfully to the master, had been treated with such ferocity by the man, when a gust of wind, and some awkwardness on the part of Burridge, scattered his papers. The breeze wafted one of them towards Delamere, who, of course, in common courtesy, though he had intended to avoid Burridge, was obliged to pick it up, and hasten towards him to return it to him. Poor Burridge presented a fine picture, in the tragic-

comic style. In trying to save his papers, he had let fall his books, and, worse still, his slate, which was smashed into fifty pieces. He stood, as Newton might have stood among his burnt papers, or a hero among the ruins of his country.

"My slate!" at length escaped him—" the new slate Bab bought me to-day, with that difficult verb, aimer, to love, conjugated on it!—Pick up the pieces, Tim!—here, I'll carry them—Oh, my dicté! my translation!"

"A gentleman have picked up them treasures of hintelleckt, sur, and is a-bringing them. Oh! sur, it's Captain Delamere!"

"Tim!" said Burridge, not heeding him, and collecting Hamel's French Grammar, Boyer's Dictionary, The New French Vocabulary, and a book of manuscript dialogues, by Bab, which, with "Le Trésor de l'Ecolier Français," "The Sea," and "I'd be a butterfly," had been upset, "Tim! I'm ruined! I'm undone!"

"Don't take on so, measter."

"I 've lost my dicté, Tim !"

"No, no, sir, here it comes; but oh, sur, if there aint Corinne a flowing down the gutter." While Tim was rescuing Corinne, as well as stocks and back-board would admit, Delamere approached.

"Ah! Mr. Burridge, how do you do?"

"Have you got my dicté, and my translation?" said Burridge.

"I have picked up these papers."

"Give 'em me: yes, these are they; thank you."

"But how are you, Mr. Burridge? it is long since we met."

"Oh! I beg your pardon, Delamere,—how are you? I was so distressed at the loss of those important papers, I hardly knew you. Long since we met. Ah! time always seems long to those who have nothing to do; but that's not the case with me—I find it but too short: here, let's walk on—my time is all apportioned."

"My dear sir, as your valet is so encumbered,

let me help you to carry some of those books, till you come to a coach or cab."

"A coach or cab! I want no coach or cab: exercise is education's hand-maid;—I always walk to the New-road and back."

"But you look so encumbered with all those books."

"Look! to whom? to idle, uneducated loungers. No, I am not ashamed of bearing under my arm what all are proud of carrying in their heads! How do you think I look?—I mean in health and figure." And he held himself up, and stepped out, as he had been taught by Bab.

"Look? admirably! and I think you've acquired quite a military air."

"Curious, your remarking that! another friend often tells me so:" (that other was Bab). "By-the-by, where are you going, Delamere?"

"Oh! only to Jenkinson's nursery-gardens, here, close by, to choose flowers. A tedious job," said Delamere, hoping to get rid of the rigid time-economist. "Why, that's where I'm going to! so we'll go together, as I often walk there—(though I'm not a customer)—I shall be glad to be seen with any one buying anything. The gardeners have looked surlily at me of late, and once asked for something to drink: they'll think I brought you!"

"But can you spare the time?"

"I always spend half an hour here, on my way home; for, to tell you the truth, Delamere, I am engaged in some important literary pursuits, for which purpose I daily attend some eminent professors;" (he did not add, what Delamere knew, that they were petticoat professors;) "and after leaving them, I come here, for quiet and fresh air, to run over in my own mind what I've learnt new. It's astonishing how the air sharpens the mental as well as the bodily appetite, and improves both digestions."

At this moment Tim came up, and whispered something to Burridge; Delamere caught the words, "Wocabulary and Werb."

"By-and-by, Tim," replied Burridge, in a loud whisper: "I know them quite." "Tim," said Delamere, who then remembered the flower, "I have a question to ask you,—why did you tread on that peony, and throw it into the gutter?"

"What peony?" said Burridge.

"Oh, Tim knows what I mean," said Delamere, anxious to solve a mystery, but careful not to get Tim (whose oddities had often amused him) into a scrape.

"I do know, sur," said Tim, with a proud flush of virtue, "and I 'm not ashamed to say."

"What do you mean, Tim?" said Burridge, who, when alive to other people's affairs, was very curious about them: "I insist on knowing."

"Well, then, sur, you shall know!—Tooked up, as you are, sur, with larning and literature, you didn't see as Miss Bab throwed you a pichoney when she said adieu, au revoor."

"And instead of picking it up, and giving it to me, you trod on it and kicked it away, you scoundrel!" said Burridge, pale with passion. "I should have been a bigger scoundrel if I hadn't a-done it, and a despert willin too;—that flower wud a turned to a thorn in your side, measter!—While you kips company along of Miss Jessica, and is on the wery heve of matrimony, no other lady did ought to try to gallivant along of you, nor to chuck you flowers, nor to try to win away your 'art; and when they does, which aint at all your fault, for you, sur, are all moral wirtue, so far from purmoting, I'll purtect and purvent! And now I humbly axes you pardon, sur."

Burridge could say nothing but "Tim, go home and get dinner ready; I have something to say to Captain Delamere."

Tim's explanation, from which Delamere had expected so much amusement, had been productive of extreme pain, since it seemed to confirm the odious report of Jessica's engagement to Burridge: it was in vain that he said to himself that he was engaged to another—that she was nothing to him; spite of himself,

his cheek paled, and his knees trembled, and tears of bitter regret rose to, but did not fall from, his eyes.

But Burridge had been that day particularly fascinated by Bab; and he began to remember that he was not actually engaged to Jessica, and that he was free to marry Bab; the mention of Jessica's name, however, reminded him of a duty he had to perform by her, and so he explained the affair of the loan, and added, the money had been repaid.

Delamere felt much relieved; it is so painful to despise where we have been wont to revere! He summoned courage to remark, "From what Tim said, you are soon to be a Benedict?"

"Why, yes, I suppose I shall; but I doubt now whether Miss Jessica will be my wife."

"How so? surely you would not jilt her."

"Sir," said Burridge, with proud scorn, "do I look like a jilt? No, sir, I have proposed to her;—I have offered to settle half my fortune on her—a poor, unhappy dependent child of charity as she is; and I should think she can't but be in love with me, so much as she's seen of me, both in company and alone. However, she vows it is all a mistake of mine, and she has actually returned that elegant yellow shawl;—however, if she doesn't like it or me, there are those who do: but I cannot believe her in earnest. Perhaps she thinks by keeping me off she'll keep me on, but she'd better not go too far: but fancy, if it is so, a girl without a penny, nobody knows who, miserably put upon by Lady Vernon, and hated by Aurelia, to prefer beggary to me!" and he stepped out, and hummed "I'd be a butterfly." "Oh, it cannot be!"

"Well, if it is, she is disinterested, poor girl!"
"She's a fool! or, worse still, she's mad!"

No, thought Osmond, as he quitted Burridge, she is in love with Marcus!

He ordered the Cape jasmin to be sent to Aurelia, and he hastened home.

On the table he found a letter; it had been addressed to him at Paris, and had been sent back to London by his banker, who was apprised of his return to England. It was from Marcus Vernon; written, of course, before he knew or dreamt of the possibility of his marrying Aurelia, and ran thus:—

## " DEAR DEL.

"I suppose this will find your retreat, though for the life of me I cannot; but then 'there is a spirit in the leaves.' It would be more sure, though, if it came from some pertinacious dun. I know, by experience, those ferrets always find one out wherever one may be. Well, my regiment is ordered to ----. Heaven knows, Del., whether we shall ever meet again. I inclose £150 you once lent me; you have forgotten it-I have not; nor all your kindness, seasoned by good counsel. Fortunately, I am ordered where I shall find my own dear little Lucy, who will make any place seem like home; but then I leave Jessica, whom I have ever loved as a favourite sister, and who has ever looked on me as a brother. I leave her, alas!

little appreciated and less beloved at home. My mother (I suppose it is a mother's feeling), having had penetration enough to discover that she is fifty times more irresistible than our perfect beauty Aurelia, hates her; and Aurelia, having been brought up to dread her as a rival, does not love her. If she and I could have contrived to fall the least bit in love with each other, I would have married her, and carried her away from all her foes and trials. I would, as it is, only she wouldn't hear of it; and, as I am poor as a church mouse, her fate would not have been much improved by that step; and now, to be candid, I do not urge it, for Clara Hauton is going over (her father is my colonel, you know), and the dashing young Amazon is beginning to make some impression on my heart. Oh! talking of Jessy-I find old Burridge has been mentioning that I got the poor girl to borrow two hundred pounds of him (for me), when I was in danger of arrest in Paris. I wish I had been lodged in jail rather than have given rise to a breath against my delicate,

high-minded, sisterly Jessy—the kindest and noblest girl on earth! If you have heard it, you will now understand it; and pray, if you hear it mentioned, state the truth. God bless you, dear Del.! If you are following some French coquette, she will lead you into the 'slough of Despond!' beware.

"Ever your affectionate,
"MARCUS VERNON."

Alas for Delamere !—How often had he wished (with the vain sigh we breathe for the unattainable) to see Jessica,—his fancy's idol,—justified.

Oh, ever what we wildly wish comes not, or comes too late! Oh, to have rescued her from this miserable dependence,—to have showered every blessing wealth and passionate love can give on that meek, beauteous head! But it was too late—Aurelia, so gifted, so beautiful, dying for him! rescued by his professed love! justice, honour, gratitude, made it treason to think of Jessica; and Jessica was well and happy, and

blooming; unconcerned at his absence, regardless of his fate; while Aurelia was only now in a state of doubtful convalescence, and a relapse might destroy her. So he hastened back to the Vernons, and was admitted to the boudoir, where Lady Vernon stole about on tip-toe, her finger on her lips, for Aurelia slept, and Osmond was allowed to watch by the sofa on which lay the matchless form of the sleeping beauty.

## CHAPTER V.

They are at Vernon Hall: Jessica has received them with a well-assumed composure, a quiet dignity, which belied the throbbing agony of her heart. True, Delamere saw no trace of the robust health which had been attributed to her: he was almost startled at the deadly pallor of her face, and the icy touch of her hand; but when Lady Vernon, with mock affection, remarked, that she did not look as blooming as she had hoped to have seen her from all accounts, she replied, that she was suffering from a headache caused by a long walk in the sun, and as soon as possible she retired to her room. Poor girl!—she retired to weep, to

pray, to question her own heart, and to shudder at its replies; and then to pray again, and to rise strengthened and refreshed.

But the struggle was too severe: living in the same house, she was compelled often to meet with Delamere; and, if she could have strengthened her heart had she seen in him the triumphant joy of a happy lover, his pale cheek, and his quiet dejection, kept her interest for ever alive, and threw over love the sanctifying veil of pity.

Jessica was miserable—intensely miserable; for a sense of wrong, unavoidable, unintended wrong, sat like a curse upon her heart: her only pleasure was to wander far away alone, or with little Egbert, who now often spent the day at Vernon Hall—for his mother was happy when he was with Delamere; and Delamere, having now taken up his nightly abode in his own home, used to take Egbert back to Mandeville Castle in the evening, on his return to Delamere Grove.

Egbert was ever talking of his dear cousin,

and with childish prolixity telling long stories of his goodness, his bravery, his generosity, which Jessica could not deny herself the dangerous luxury of listening to. Aurelia had recovered all her brilliant bloom, and all the world thought Osmond the happiest of men. True, her silent reserve threw a gloom over the tête-à-têtes of the lovers; but she listened so meekly, and blushed so eloquently, and lively converse would have jarred on Delamere's dejected spirit; and Mrs. Winter often came to enliven them with gentle sentiment, and point out her grace and beauty; and the wedding was fixed for a month hence.

Lord Stare, who had been rather inattentive when in town to the demoiselle à marier, grew very respectfully devoted to the bride elect, and contrived to be a great deal in the neighbourhood: thus making Aurelia regret that she was no longer free.

Jessica, miserably sick at heart, loathing herself for her involuntary interest in the affianced of another, and feeling that whenever she met his eyes the blood forsook her cheek, and her hand trembled, and aware that cold and cruel eyes beheld it, too, was revolving in her mind all possibilities of escaping from a scene of so much trial and torture, when Marcus came home on a farewell visit, and with the kindness of heart which seemed almost to counterbalance his many errors of head, devoted himself almost entirely to an endeavour to soothe and enliven poor Jessica.

This did not escape the malignant eye of Lady Vernon, already exasperated at discovering that all Aurelia's beauty had not succeeded in winning one particle of the real and intense devotion Delamere evidently still felt (spite of himself) for the poor protégée.

At length Marcus departed: he promised, if possible, after having visited his father for the purpose of bidding adieu, to return for one more fond farewell; and Lady Vernon took it into her plotting head, that when he did return he intended to carry off Jessica with him as his wife.

This idea filled her with inexpressible rage;

her son, her idol,—he who in time would certainly be the Earl of Rockalpine,—make the hated, perhaps base-born, protégée his future countess. Oh, how should she prevent it? Prevent! Marcus had never yielded to any one: what he had chosen to do he had ever done! no, she could not prevent, but she could vent all her bitterness on the poor victim.

Already she was incensed against her for having refused to imply to Sir William, that she had been of the party in town, and that part of the long milliner's bill was incurred by her. Another source of wrath arose from the circumstance of Delamere's having shewn, when Jessica suddenly fainted the evening before, an alarm and anxiety which none but Aurelia should have awakened; and having, in spite of sneers and inuendoes, himself carried her into the air, and lingered by her till she was quite recovered.

It was on her return from a walk, in which Jessica had been pondering on the best plan to escape from a scene which she shuddered to find herself yet unwilling to quit, that Lady Vernon joined her.

"I hope you are quite recovered from your attack of last night? Very strange! I never knew you faint before. Young ladies should always struggle against fainting in the presence of young men. I, for one, believe it can almost always be conquered. It seems so like a ruse to alarm and attract attention."

"Well, I cannot be suspected of that, since there was no one present but Captain Delamere."

"No one but ——oh, Jessica!" and her ladyship shook her head.

Jessica felt her cheeks burn with the conscious flame of her heart; her knees shook; her eyes filled with tears; she could not speak.

"Dear me! what have I said to agitate you so?"

"Madam," said Jessica, gasping for breath, "are not the accusations you imply enough to agitate any one?"

"No, not any one who feels herself inno-

cent! Jessica, I have seen through you long; I know all your plots and plans; you have long been a viper in my bosom, but I have known you as such!—Listen, girl: you love Captain Delamere! Nay, never faint, now; your cousin's affianced husband is not at hand to carry you in his arms; to bend over you, and to call you by, heaven knows what fond names, due only to my daughter!—I have seen all your little manœuvres to estrange his affections and undermine his love; your 'bidden blushes,' and assumed tremors; your crocodile tears: I have seen it all!" and her ladyship shook her head, and peered through her half-closed eyes.

"Madam, I shall endure these insults no longer," said Jessy, rising from the seat on which she had sunk.

"Nay, if you go, I go with you: I have yet something to say."

"Then say it here, where I can sit while I hear it, for your inhuman blows may strike me to the earth if I try to walk."

"Well, then, sit, if you please. I say I have seen all your efforts to attract Captain Delamere since you knew him engaged to your cousin; and he, who never gave a thought to you before, is, I am shocked to see, caught by them. He who never noticed, never looked at you, when he was free."

"Forgive me, madam!" said Jessica, and she was almost roused to tell her aunt that he had owned to Burridge his intention of proposing to her: then, thinking that he, as Aurelia's husband, might wish that unknown, she checked herself.

"Oh, you think he did admire, perhaps love you. Pray what proofs have you, Miss Jessica? produce them, I beg."

Jessica was silent.

"No! you know he ever treated you with silent indifference. But this is not all: though a coquette, you are a calculating one; and while you are trying to inveigle away the affections of your cousin's affianced, you persuade Marcus that you love him. You will induce him to ruin himself by marrying you: he, the future Earl of Rockalpine, is to place a coronet on your low-born brow! You start:—did you not think I had seen through it? Oh, how the cunning are blinded by the very meshes they weave."

"I deny it, madam," said Jessica, with a calm scorn: "I bid you refer to your son himself! I have ever loved him as a fond sister, and as a sister only. Were he in possession of the coronet you anticipate for him, I would not be his wife! Barbarous, brutal as your conduct to me is, I owe it to you as his mother to assure you your suspicions are false!"

"Oh, of course, you would not own it to me; but if you are thus heart-whole, why do you not marry Mr. Burridge? He has wealth and influence; and you, though he has proposed to you, persist in continuing an encumbrance on an all but ruined family, sinking us still lower in debt and danger; refusing me the little aid of a few poor words with your uncle!—living on me!—for the fortune was all mine—an in-

solent dependent!—meanly and treacherously undermining the peace of a poor trusting young creature, my own child, by winning the affections of her affianced lover, and manœuvring all the time to marry my noble son,—my son, the future Lord Rockalpine. If it is not so, when Mr. Burridge comes, the day after to-morrow, as I expect he will, to renew his proposals, accept him, and the two weddings can take place on the same day. Do you agree to that?" and Lady Vernon laughed, tauntingly.

"No, madam," said Jessica, repressing her tears, and rising to go into the house.

"Oh! I'll come with you, 'tears are woman's weapons,' you know, and I fancy I guess in whose presence you are going to wield them. Oh, heavens! a letter:" (a servant brought one)
—"a vile dunning piece of impertinence from
— Come Jessica, there, let's be friends; write to your uncle for the money: you need not tell a falsehood, only say, 'our bill,' and I'll forgive and forget all; or, stop, ask Burridge for it."

"I would much sooner be imprisoned for the debt myself, aunt, than do any of the things you suggest; it is for me to forgive to forget were impossible, while memory lasts good morning!"

"Oh, you vile, mean, treacherous, ungrateful creature!" said her ladyship, in an uncontrollable rage, following her, - "would to heaven I had never seen your odious face, you pitiful poverty-struck dependent old maid! Oh, that I should be compelled to dwell with you,-to see you living on my substance-to feed a vulture to gnaw my very heart out :- I cannot live here, and see you making base attempts to win away my child's intended. I shall take her back to town in a few days, till she is married, to save her peace from your wiles. Oh, that I might never, never see you again!" Here Delamere and Aurelia were seen coming towards them. Lady Vernon smoothed her infuriated brow, and prepared to meet them. Jessica suddenly turned into the hall, and hiding with her hands the tears she could no longer repress, rushed into her own room, bolted the door, and flung herself on her knees before Him, "who casts around the world an equal eye, and feels for all who live."

Before Him the weeping protegée was as great, nay greater, than the proud and gemmed empress!

When Jessica rose from her knees, she was resolved:—she knew that they were all invited to dine, sleep, and spend the next day at Mandeville Castle; she resolved to excuse herself, on the plea (certainly not a false one) of a severe headache;—an advertisement she had seen the day before in a morning paper recurred to her mind, she hastened to the library, found it, and brought it to her room.

"I cannot live here longer," she said to herself,—"I cannot endure the dependence she has taunted me with,—I cannot eat of her bread and drink of her cup; but, more, far more than all, —I cannot bear to find that my heart would endure it all for the sake of being where he (the affianced of another!) dwells-that to see him, to hear his voice, to know him well, has this beguiling power, and could reconcile me even to my fate here! No, I will go. The heart's involuntary impulse, thou, oh, God! who didst implant it-thou wilt not impute it as a crime! The crime is, when those to whom thou has given conscience to condemn, and reason and virtue to conquer, basely yield with a few faint struggles,-yield to what?-to a hidden, silent, but yet sinful interest-Oh, no, I am not so vile a thing !"-She took up the paper, and read, "Wanted immediately, at Bordeaux, a young English lady, capable of teaching music, drawing, and her own language, without the assistance of masters, in an establishment for young ladies: if a Protestant, she cannot be lodged in the house, but her salary will on that account be the higher. Apply to Mr. Suitall, school-agent, ----street, who must be satisfied as to talents and respectability .- N.B. Any lady anxious for the situation should apply at once,

"At any rate the effort will be one step up the steep hill," she said to herself, "even should I fail!"—and she sat down to write to Mr. Suitall.

The 15th, and it was already the 12th! Some one knocked at her door—it was Flounce.

Please, miss, my lady sends her love, and opes your 'cadache is better. She thinks with you, miss, that, with such a troublesome companion, it would n't inflict any pleasure on you to go out to dinner, but, as there's all these commissions to be done in town, and James is a-going to take the carriage up this evening, to bring down the other wehicle next day or the day after, my lady thinks the drive might ease your 'cad, miss, and you could see these people, and pay'em half their bills, and set all to-rights, miss. You could come back to-morrow, or next day, miss, in the pheaton."

"Tell my aunt I will go, Flounce."

"Very well, miss. I think I should have done just as well, miss," said Flounce, who would have liked to have seen her dear "hare presumptuous." "I don't know what impediment there is in my character, miss, that I can't be trusted to town to pay a few bills.—You'll go then, miss?"

"Yes.—This seems providential," murmured Jessica, when she was alone; "the means sent to aid the will;" and she prepared hastily to pack up all necessary to her.

She heard a carriage rolling along the road beneath her window: she looked out,—it was Delamere's phaeton,—he was driving,—Aurelia sat beside him on the box, Lady Vernon and Mrs. Winter behind: they were going to Mandeville Castle. He looked up, he saw her, he bowed,—as he took off his hat, almost reverentially, she thought his noble brow looked sad,—and, though he smiled—it was of those "smiles which might as well be tears."

She drew back before any one else beheld her. "I shall never see him again!" she sobbed, as she sank on her knees. "Oh, Father, forgive this passionate regret, and accept my atoning sacrifice!"

Lady Vernon, having already repented of the violent rage into which she had suffered herself to be betrayed, was anxious not to meet Jessica till a little time had softened the just resentment of that forgiving spirit; she was therefore very glad to get her away for a few days. She knew, besides, that whatever Jessica undertook she would effect to the best of her power; besides, she was constantly in terror, lest Jessica, whom she judged in some measure by herself, should contrive, before the marriage, to let Delamere know that she had written the review on his poem. The result of such a discovery she sadly dreaded, for Aurelia was now quite well, and preferring in her heart Lord Stare, who, like many fashionables, only cared for that which was beyond his reach, -would, she felt sure, foolishly resign Delamere, if much incensed against him.

Jessica left Vernon Hall with weeping eyes

and a sad heart; she took a most affectionate leave of the housekeeper, Mrs. Stanley, a lady by birth, though by poverty obliged to earn her livelihood. She was devotedly attached to Sir William, with whose mother she had lived in the same capacity; Jessica remembered her as long as she could remember anything,—ever bringing to her school, cakes, playthings, and in later years trinkets and new dresses. She was somewhat prim and stately, but she loved poor Jessica, and often contrived to shew her little attentions, in her power as housekeeper, which, had they been known, would have enraged Lady Vernon.

It was evening when Jessica arrived in town, but she sent for the people her aunt had desired her to see, and, by her graceful and winning candor of manner, induced them to be satisfied for a time with half the amount of their bills,—she then went to bed, with a strange feeling of dread and desolation; but she slept, and in her dreams, she saw her aunt's taunting, bitter smile-she saw Aurelia fainting, supported by Lord Stare-and Delamere, with his earnest looks of love, holding out his arms to herself: "Oh, guilty, guilty dreams!" she cried, as she sprang from her bed, "when fancy prompts, unchecked by conscience or reason!" She had to go to a shop in the city for her aunt, and a few doors off was Mr. Suitall's office. How strangely she felt as she entered it-how humbled !-her knees shook, her voice faltered. Her equipage, and her extreme elegance of appearance, made Mr. Suitall imagine she came to be provided with a governess, not a situation-He stuck his pen (with which he was noting the 25th applicant, who had just left him) behind his ear, bowed low, smiled obsequiously, and shewed the way to his drawing-room. "Why should I feel ashamed?" said Jessica to herself, "am I not strong enough to perform a duty, to obey my conscience!"

"Have you many applicants for situations, Mr. Suitall," she began, "I——"

"Yes, my lady!" - (for peeping through the little window of his office he had seen the baronet's arms on the carriage)-" many applicants, and many situations,-ladies, every way qualified, on my books,-French, English, Italian, German, and Spanish-finishing, medium, and nursery governesses. Young ladies of high families, middle-aged ladies with no incumbrances, and elderly ladies who have seen better days .- French, music, dancing, morality piety, calisthenic and gymnastic exercises, geography, history and the use of the globes, all united in one individual, my lady!-of pleasing address, accomplished manners, and highest references, my lady !- just put her on my books, where she won't remain long, my lady!" This was so rapidly poured out, that Jessica had no time to speak; but when, having humbly motioned her to a sofa, he came forth with his book to give the address of Miss Fitzbrowne, Jessica, again blushing deeply, said, "You mistake, Mr. Suitall: I am come in search of a situation, not of a governess."

In his surprise, Mr. Suitall let his book fall. Then, assuming a very different air, pulling up his shirt collar and his cravat, putting his finger to his nose, pressing his lips, and rolling his eyes as if in thought, he gave a sort of half whistle, drew a chair close to Jessica, threw himself into it, and placing one nankeen-covered leg on the knee of the other, began to stroke it fondly down.

"Then you're not her ladyship?" he said, at length.

" No !" faltered Jessica.

"What is your name, if I may be so bold?"

" Miss Thornton."

"Ah!—ah!—hem—good name: we've several Thorntons on the list: Thorntons, Seytons, Douglas's, Dashingtons, Eldertons."

"Eldertons?" It struck Jessy, if she wanted a reference, they would do.

"Yes, three or four: oh, they're regular old stagers; had them off and on for twenty years; but they're only for day-scholars. Now, what are you looking out for? something snug and merry? a widower with several children, to whom you'll be a mother (in time), thanks to your pretty face? or companion to an old purblind dowager, with a dashing mad-cap son, eh?"

"No," said Jessica, rising, in disgust: "I came to you about a situation at Bordeaux, advertised in the Herald, for which I felt qualified; but, perhaps, as you have so many applicants, it is disposed of?"

Suitall had not yet found any one to suit; and, if he failed, he lost five pounds per annum on both sides: so, changing the air which had given offence, but with which he had meant to fascinate, he said, very respectfully, "Pray be seated, madam; I believe you are yet in time—the day after to-morrow the vessel sails—the parties are very particular as to manners and appearance; and you, madam, come quite up to it—hit the mark to a t—will you oblige me with a reference?"

Jessica then, with a trembling voice, told him in confidence who she was; and that family disagreements induced her to wish to get this situation privately, and unknown to her friends.

The practised eye of Suitall convinced him she was sincere. He at once engaged her for his client—the superior of a convent at Bordeaux; and as the salary, since she was to lodge and board herself, was to be a hundred a year, he held out his hand for five pounds.—This Jessica had not with her; but determining on the sale of some trinkets, she promised to forward it in the course of the day.

"Have you a passport, madam, or shall I have the honour of procuring you one? As you wish to do the thing incog. perhaps I'd better get it for you? A passport's fifteen shillings, I believe—my premium on it five ditto—I'll trouble you for a sovereign, madam!"

Jessy gave her last sovereign—agreed that he should send the passport by the messenger who should bring him the five pounds; and then, delighted to have made ten pounds, as he called it, in as many minutes, he patronisingly shook poor Jessica's unwilling hand, and followed her to the carriage.

On his return, he found that his clerk, a clever, stunted boy, had pumped out of the coachman, that his visitor was Miss Thornton, niece of Sir William Vernon, of Berkeley-square, hated by my lady, and loved by every one else.

"That'll do, Screw," said Suitall; "all's right — people's servants are excellent references; they know'em best; there's sixpence for your pains."

#### CHAPTER VI.

"There is nothing else I can do?" said Jessica to herself, when she was alone. "My uncle!—In his desperate circumstances I cannot apply to him—I should but add to his difficulties, his sorrows—enrage him against his wife!—No: I have talents: it is my duty to use them for my own support. Oh! hard and bitter Lady Vernon! your bread would choke, your cup would poison me, now! and, if your cruel words are true, and Delamere does interest himself in me, that interest is as criminal now for him to feel as for me to excite, and I will shun it!—No, no: I must be firm: yet how my heart fails me!"

In opening a trinket-box, to seek some orna-

ments for sale, Jessica's eye fell on Lucy's forgotten letter, to be opened only in case of need—this was such a case. Jessica opened it—a bank note for twenty pounds fell from it. There were these lines, hastily written:

"If, as I foresee, dearest Jessica! you are driven from a home where I shall not be at hand to console you, and soften others, you will be in sad need; and this poor offering may be useful to you.—God bless you and guide you!

"Your devoted

"Lucy,
" on her wedding-day."

Poor Lucy! on her wedding-day! with so little money as Jessica knew she had—how generous! how kind! Jessica forwarded the five pounds to Mr. Suitall—received her passport—found that worthy had secured her a berth in the "Volage," (the Bordeaux steamer,) and charged half a sovereign premium for so doing.

It was now the fourteenth—the vessel started on the morrow. The coachman, who had a newly-married wife in town, had decided that the horses could not return to Vernon Hall till the evening of the fifteenth; by him, then, Jessica resolved to write to her aunt, which she did in these words:—

"Your taunts and reproaches have succeeded; and never will one you have so hated, so persecuted, and so wronged, be an inmate of your house again. I have accepted a dependent situation in a foreign land-but there, at least, I expect that the effort to please will be met with courtesy, and that to serve with kindness. I should have taken this step long ago, had I been aware of what you so cruelly taunted me with, namely, that it was on you I was dependent. This step of mine sufficiently disproves all your calumnies. You can say what you choose to those who inquire for me: but, for your own sake, I advise you to give my absence no sinister motive. When my cousin is married, if then my uncle should have obtained an appointment, I shall probably return to him.

For you, I hope the hardness of heart you have ever shown me may not be bitterly visited on you and yours; but that God may forgive you, as freely as I do.

# " JESSICA THORNTON.

"I have succeeded in satisfying the tradespeople with the money you sent them, and they all are now very well disposed."

She then wrote to her uncle.

# " DEAREST UNCLE.

"Forgive the apparently rash step I have taken; I cannot enter into all my motives now, yet, believe me, they are irresistible. I have talents, and it is my duty now to avail myself of them: therefore, I have accepted a situation as governess in a foreign land, (European, though,) but it is highly respectable; far more so than dependence on those in need. I know your affection for me would induce you to recal me at once and peremptorily; and therefore I dare not tell you my retreat: but, if you succeed in

obtaining the appointment you expect, I can then return to you, without the degrading consciousness of being a burthen to you.

"I am now going to address myself to Mr. Burridge; and I think I can move him to zeal in your behalf. In a month, dearest uncle, I will write to you again, to know if fortune will enable you to welcome me back. It would be well for all to give the best excuse you can for my absence. God bless you, beloved uncle! forgive your poor unhappy

" JESSICA."

A few lines of affectionate farewell to Marcus, a long letter to Lucy, and the following one to Burridge, completed Jessica's painful task.

# " MY DEAR FRIEND,

"(For such even now I think you are)—I write in strict confidence; but I have ever seen in you the highest principles of honour; and therefore I trust you. I have been of late,

from many causes, so very unhappy at my uncle's, or rather my aunt's, that, unable longer to endure my fate, I have resolved to turn my talents to account, and am now on the point of accepting a situation in France as a governess. And as I am quite sure that you do not esteem me the less, for having refused to give my hand where I could not bestow my heart, I venture to entreat you, as a last request, to do your utmost for my poor uncle. I can never return to him till his resources are quite independent of her ladyship; therefore, if you wish to recal your friend from exile, you will bestir yourself. No one knows the place of my destination; but, in a few weeks, I will write to you again, to know whether your kindness has availed for my uncle.

"Trusting you may find, in one fairer and happier, the love you generously sought from the poor *protégée*, I remain, dear sir,

"Yours, most faithfully,

"JESSICA THORNTON."

This done, Jessica sent for the coachman (it was now the morning of the 15th): he was gone to take his wife to see the wax-work. Jessica left her letter (to her aunt) with the housemaid for him, and a message that she had an engagement, which would prevent her returning with him to Vernon Hall; but that he was not to fail to put that letter into her aunt's hands on his arrival there. She then ordered a hackney coach; had her luggage placed in it; entered it with a painful excitement of feeling; stopped to put her other letters in the post; then drove down to the docks-was just in time, and, without one kind farewell, one pressure of a friendly hand, one tear to reply to hers, which fell like rain-the poor protégée set sail in the "Volage." Hiding herself in a berth from glancing Frenchmen and staring Englishmen, the orphan commended herself to the Father of the orphan; and, wearied with excitement, and a sleepless night, was soon in the "Land of Dreams."

### CHAPTER VII.

WE will pass over Lady Vernon's cowardly dismay and grovelling terror, Aurelia's silly wonder, and Sir William's ill-repressed rage; which, had not Jessica so generously avoided one word which could implicate her aunt, would have been terrible indeed. But, as the poor girl had put it, no one seemed to be to blame, and all agreed that Delamere and the rest of the world had better be told that Jessica, not being in good health, was gone for a time with a friend to the sea-side.

Sir William felt really very uneasy about the fate of the poor girl; but, perceiving that inquiry was more likely to lead to exposure of his family than to the discovery of her retreat, he resolved to await the letter she had promised to write to him, and in the meantime to make it appear to the world that she was absent with his sanction.

As for Marcus, he was ordered off before he had an opportunity of visiting the Hall again; and the smiles and glances of Clara Hauton left him little time for many ponderings on Jessica's fate.

Aurelia and her mamma were now entirely taken up with preparations for the approaching wedding. The bride elect of Osmond Delamere had no difficulty in obtaining credit. Marabout was all smiles and curtsies; and the jeweller's whole assortment of necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and tiaras, was at her service. As she had little delicacy of feeling, she never suffered herself to be disturbed for a moment by the thought that Delamere would be answerable for all these debts; and Lady Vernon, while she chose some finery for herself, as presents from Aurelia, (in which, however, she

was not much encouraged by her daughter,) whispered, that a few tears from such eyes, and a few rosy smiles from such lips, would make the bridegroom only too pleased to pay all, particularly if she had the bills sent in during the honey-moon.

As for Delamere, since Jessica's departure, an increased dejection seemed to weigh upon his spirits-life had lost its charms. He considered that his honour and compassion alike compelled him to marry Aurelia; but he trusted, that, in the sweet intimacy of wedded life, she would throw off her cov restraint and silent reserve, and enchant him by revealing the long-concealed treasures of her heart and mind. She was exquisitely beautiful, and he believed her to be both gifted and good; and so he tried hard to be happy; but that effort is always a vain one. His pursuits seemed to have lost their charm for him, (all but poetry;) and his strain was so sad, that no one would have recognised therein the chosen bridegroom of beauty. He sold out of the army, proposed The state of the s

One owning at Manipulle Castle he had the proof of the grounds with Jupin; the weekend is book and both so beautiful. the second second laws pronounced the man for min other, but the find work on its line was work of proper-they care me the lights of the least, and they did not read here: but she blashed and presed his had but he beatiful head on his similar-rained for fine eyes to his, and eminored "Dearest." And then, feeling a the drops of min full factal for a gay new ties, the proposed leaving this "descent one;" for the dress was about two, may dearer. Osmood walked with her to the castle, and then conthough the park. It now

rained fast; but the shower seemed to revive his drooping spirit: he was wondering where Jessica was then; when, to his surprise, he saw Mrs. Winter standing under a large tree, with a woman poorly clad. They seemed in earnest conference; and Mrs. Winter, having put some money into the woman's hand, covered her head with her shawl, and prepared to run into the castle.

"Generous creature!" said Osmond: "she is indeed of those who 'do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame;" and he hastened towards her.

"I fear you will be chilled," he said, "thus exposed, without a bonnet, to this heavy shower. Perhaps the warmth of your generous heart may protect you—I hope it will."

"What do you mean?" she said, leaning on the arm he offered, and glancing tenderly at him.

"I mean, that I have surprised you in a secret errand of mercy—I saw you giving your generous assistance to that poor woman."

Mrs. Winter blushed the deepest crimson:

she was silent for a few moments; at length she said, "She has a poor sister, a widow, in deep distress, and I ———"

"And you are the friend of the friendless; let me contribute something to this good work —be my almoner, sweet friend."

He took out some money-

"Nay, nay, one sovereign only," said Mrs. Winter; "we must assist, but not spoil the poor."

" Where is Aurelia?"

" The rain drove her in."

"Indeed! Ah, she is still so delicate! Let us sit down on this bench—the trees shelter us—I feel so tired—so trembling. I thought I never saw Aurelia look so lovely as to-day! How happy you are, dear Osmond!"

" Very," sighed Osmond.

"Ah! why that sigh? Oh, I understand.

'Love makes his best interpreter—a sigh!'
Is it not so?"

" So the poet says."

" I wonder where poor Jessica Thornton

really is," said Mrs. Winter, suddenly; "her disappearance was very mysterious; I feel much interested about her; for my poor silly conscience sadly smites me. Do you know, Osmond, I fear I wronged that poor girl! I believe she was all truth and tenderness, and sincere devotion to you! I find she refused Burridge, and I believe Marcus too. But all is for the best. You are so happy now, Osmond!" and she stole a glance at his pale and agitated face.

"Oh, no, no !-do not mock my heart!"

"Oh, yes,—you must be! You do love Aurelia—have I not good proof you do? Could you have chosen a woman for your wife whom you did not passionately love, why not poor Eveleen? Think you I have forgotten that I knelt at your feet, and flung my fortune there too? And you—disinterested being! hesitated not one moment. What advantage has Aurelia but her earlier youth, and more brilliant beauty? But they were nothing could they not have won your love. Oh, no!

unloved, Aurelia would have been less to you than Eveleen—you would have rejected her as you rejected me! See—see! the sun comes forth—and she, the sun of your soul, is coming too! Oh, Osmond, do look happier—are you not well? I cannot bear my own misery—how am I to bear even the suspicion of yours?"

"Oh, you naughty fellow! and you naughty girl!" said Elder, approaching, with Aurelia and Egbert; "you'll catch your deaths, you know, you improvident dears! The countess has fallen into such a nice little nap, you know, after her leeches,—they stuck famously, and came off so full—such loves! Here, I've brought these clogs for those pretty, naughty little pettitoes!" And Elder, in true toady spirit, stooped down to force Mrs. Winter's feet into the clogs.

"Now, don't Elder—I hate clogs! You are such an old bore!—tu es si béte!"

"Dear little foot!—it shall go in," said Elder, persevering; but in doing so, she splashed, with her own large pattens, an immense piece of mud on Mrs. Winter's beautiful French lavender silk shawl, and embroidered stocking!

"There—see what you've done—you old bête!" said Mrs. Winter, kicking the clogs off: "Go away—you always do more harm than good. How am I to walk in in this state?"

"Oh, you know, Captain Delamere will carry you — and you shall put poor Elder in the corner, with a fool's-cap on, for her pains!"

"I will go and send the countess's ponychair for you," said Delamere, giving his arm to Aurelia, who thought it necessary to pout at finding him tête-à-tête with Mrs. Winter.

"And I'll go and get the foolscap ready for Elder," said Egbert, who thought that too good a joke not to be accomplished.

"Oh, yes, she deserves a fool's-cap, darling boy! But it's her heart makes a fool of her, you know. Well, poor dear papa, the Reverend Dr. Elderton, was just the same. Lord Rivers once said, you know-La, there they go-all off! Well, Lord Rivers, you know-"

"Oh!—for Heaven's sake, spare me all that cant, Elder—look at them! How beautiful she is! He must be fond of her! Oh, how I loathe—how I curse him! Elder, you know that I have knelt to that man!——and that he spurned me!——I would sell my soul to eternal perdition, to be revenged on him! Why do you think he proposed to her when he spurned me? He does not love her—the only woman he ever loved was that Jessica—I have long known that—tell me why—speak, old fool—why?"

"Oh, la! don't agitate yourself so, dear soul! La, you frighten one! You look so pale! I wish you wouldn't always be thinking about it. I suppose," added Elder, with a sad want of tact, "her youth and beauty won him! But what, after all, is kneeling—it's only just sitting on one's knees, for a minute, you know: I'd kneel to any one that would buy me an

annuity of two hundred a year—yes, for an hour a-day!"

"Woman!" said Mrs. Winter, clutching hold of her hand, "you are destitute: in all probability, you will, when you are too old for the grovelling offices of a toady, you will be a pauper in the parish workhouse! fed on a cup of gruel and a modicum of dry bread per day! Help me, as I once before proposed to you, to secure the eternal ruin of that man, and I will secure you the annuity you speak of; in earnest of which, here is a thousand pound note!" She took out the note, and held it before Elder's eyes.

Elder nervously shrowded them for a moment: the colour forsook her cheeks—she clasped her hands, and murmured, "Lead us not into temptation!" Then, suddenly starting to her feet, while the blood rushed back to her face, she said, "No, no! the temptation is terrible—but I have overcome it! I know not by what means you would secure your revenge, and encompass Delamere's ruin—but this I do

know, that the means must be guilty, and the end crime! I will not thus entirely forsake the God who in our long, long trials, has not forsaken us! I may end in a workhouse a life of bitter dependence and ceaseless cares—but God will, as he has often done, 'temper the wind to the shorn lamb;' and the water-gruel and the dry bread, meted out to the parish pauper, will be sweeter than luxuries bought, perhaps, at the price of blood!"

"Blood! you old canting fool—who spoke of blood? Is this fine pious rhapsody from you—you, who raise subscriptions for a distressed young family, and pocket the amount yourself! You who, if one commissions you to purchase a thing, charge a third more than its value!"

"With regard to the subscriptions, I own it—but are we not, indeed, a distressed family? And youth and age, you know, are relative terms, after all: to the very old, we should appear very young! I may have charged a premium for my trouble on articles I have

bought for you, but in that I do as all retailers in a commercial country have done before me, and will do after me. These are the heaviest faults which, in a long career of poverty, I have to answer for, you know; and God, who knows my trials, will forgive me, you know."

"I know no such thing; and I am sure that it is more than you deserve, ungrateful old canter as you are! You will bitterly repent this. However, if you have any respect for your vow, you cannot betray me. You will see you have lost a friend without preventing her intention, which, after all this fuss, was only to manage to bring Delamere suddenly into the lane, when Aurelia is making signs from her window to Lord Stare,—and the intercepting a letter or two."

"Oh, la! is that all? And would you secure me an annuity for that?"

"Not for that — but for friendship — 'for auld lang syne,' and your destitute state, and your imagined devotion to me, I would have done so! But since you were so ready to de-

I, of course, remained weeping and fainting. At ointed out to him that, come e rest of the property, his would be safe, he relented; s idea, himself proposed to lred a-year on his devoted re him! how divine he looked his resolution. I was just ong hysteric, and immediately nother; when I recovered, my alone with me, and at my feet; e, I pressed him to my heartto my soul! And never, as you y sister, did your Bab suffer till noment, the impious arm of man er waist. Oh! he is so noble, so ie, and so much richer than I had e was! He says, I can always have of my sisters with me to look to our , while his own Bab devotes herself love and him, and, perhaps, ere long sh-you must guess the rest. He is

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And the pony-chair being arrived, Mrs. Winter stepped into it, while Elder followed, crying vainly for quarter from the vengeful Tartar.

On her arrival at the castle, however, that poor Elder's virtue might not be, as it was its own, likewise its only reward, fate had ordained that, with a new supply of leeches and draughts for the countess, she should find a letter from Bab. It ran thus:

" Paragon, New Road.

"DEAREST PRIS,

"My beloved Jacob has proposed; and, as delays are dangerous, I have blushingly fixed this day week for the wedding; that is, if the settlements can be drawn out by that time. Dorothea and Lavinia, together, acted almost as well as you could have done; they insisted on a settlement. At first, my Jacob, who has a romantic idea of the dependence of love in a

woman, objected. I, of course, remained neuter, alternately weeping and fainting. At last, Doll, having pointed out to him that, come what would to the rest of the property, his wife's settlement would be safe, he relented; and struck by this idea, himself proposed to settle three hundred a-year on his devoted Bab. How I adore him! how divine he looked as he announced his resolution. I was just come out of a long hysteric, and immediately went off into another; when I recovered, my own Jacob was alone with me, and at my feet; for the first time, I pressed him to my heart-I clasped him to my soul! And never, as you well know, my sister, did your Bab suffer till that blissful moment, the impious arm of man to encircle her waist. Oh! he is so noble, so fond, so true, and so much richer than I had any idea he was! He says, I can always have one or two of my sisters with me to look to our household, while his own Bab devotes herself at first to love and him, and, perhaps, ere long -I blush-you must guess the rest. He is sert me, and suspect me of a foul crime that I should shudder to think of even, Elderton, you have lost a true friend!"

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sure, Pris, he can get you a pension, or a sinecure; he will do something for all of you. Then, as he says, we might keep house together, on an income mutually contributed; but, should he fail, Bab's home will ever be open to her sisters, and Bab's purse at their disposal.

"I can write no more-I hear his step. He has been to Macbotcher about his wedding waistcoat: I fly to his arms! You know how long I have loved him. You know he has my first affections, Pris; for my foolish fancy for that vile Todd was only a vagary of my imagination. Oh, he sings 'My bonnie wee wife,' so sweetly! You must come up to the wedding, if not before. He has bought bonnets and dresses for all, at Cranbourne Alley and Shoolbred's. In time, I shall lead him to Howell and James's; but he must have his way before marriage-I, mine after; or, rather. as I adore him so, he shall have his sometimes, even then. He has presented me with a most elegant yellow cachemire (in which I shall be married); a white silk dress, and a white chip hat with orange flowers. He has bought a splendid yellow barouche at the Baker-street bazaar; and for the first year he has taken an elegant villa near Hornsey. He calls me his Bab! his own Bab! I go—to love and him! Ever, dear Pris,

"Your devoted sister,

"BAB.

"He begs me to send you a fraternal kiss—I am not jealous."

It was Delamere's custom, when he had not time to call and see the countess, on his way home, to leave Egbert with the man or woman at the lodge, who always accompanied him through the park to the castle.

"How very late it is!" said the anxious mother—"I fear something has happened! Oh Heaven! it is half-past nine. Garnet, they never were so late before! Captain Delamere is always so very considerate."

"Oh, yes, my lady! they've been later, indeed, my lady!" replied Garnet, who cared
more for "peace and quietness," as she herself
owned, than even for truth. "Try to compose
yourself, my lady! You musn't forget the
captain's a lover; and such is no good judges
of time, my lady. La! your ladyship is quite
flushed. Do take your composing draught,
my lady, and lie still for a quarter of an hour:
his lordship's quite safe. What could happen
to him, you know, my lady?"

"Oh, Garnet! God knows! I think, he

said Osmond was going to drive him home in Mrs. Winter's pony-chair, which she left at the hall."

"Well, my lady, nothing could be safer; why, I could drive it myself."

"Yes; but in all probability they will have no servants with them; and suppose they should be robbed?"

"Robbed, my lady! Oh, dear, no—it isn't possible; all through private property, except just where they pass the railway station—and there's always people about there."

"Oh, yes! yes! and such people! vagabonds, robbers, murderers! Oh, Garnet! I can lie here no longer: I shall go mad! There, it is ten o'clock! Oh, Heaven! look at the moon. Garnet, run down and tell James to go as fast as he can to the lodge, and see if Egbert is there. Perhaps he is playing with the gatekeeper's old dog: be quick, Garnet!"

And the mother, who for years had so sheltered herself from a breath of cold air, tormented by a thousand fears, rushed to the window, flung it open, and looking out, as far as she could through the moonlit park, felt not the night-breeze, nor dreamt of risk to herself.

Garnet returned. "Oh, Heaven! my lady, you'll catch your death!"

"Death! oh, do not speak of death! Some accident must have happened to him. Perhaps, ere this, my darling is dead! Oh, God! what can this mean? Had they intended to keep him there, they would have sent to say so: they are not inhuman! Delamere is no brute."

"La, my lady, the young earl is quite safe. Do come from the window—do hear reason, my lady."

"Reason, woman! you are not a mother! Oh! speak not of reason to one who fears for the safety of all this world has left! God have mercy! Take all!—all, but this! and I will not murmur!" Then, flinging herself on her knees, before the open window, she raised her clasped hands to heaven, and the large tears rolled in torrents down her pallid cheeks.

Garnet raised her, and closed the window.

"I am sure he is coming directly," she said.

"Do walk up and down the room, my lady!
that passes away time: it does with me—even
when I've a dreadful fit of tooth-ache."

"Even—why I would lay my body on a rack, if by so doing I could ease my mind by hearing he was safe! Oh, my lovely boy! so fond, so noble, so good! Where are those flowers he brought me to-day?

"They are in your waist-band, my lady."

"Oh, yes!" And she fervently kissed them.

"How he smiled when he brought them! How angelic he looked! And, oh! I spoke rather sharply to him, for leaving the door open: did I not, Garnet?"

"No, my lady, you never spoke a sharp word to my young lord yet."

"Oh yes—yes, I did! And he kissed me, and said he would not forget again. Garnet—I shall never see him more;" and, ceasing her hurried walk in the room, the poor mother threw herself on the ground, and rocked herself to and fro in her passionate despair! Then

starting up, she cried, "There is some one in the curriduc - run, Garnet - oh, God, have mercy "- and she sank, almost fainting, into a chair - "What is it?"

"In is Jumes, my lady; he has been to the ludge—the ludge-keeper himself has been out all they on business; but his wife says she hasn't seen nothing of Captain Delamere and my young lurd."

"Garnet, order two of the grooms to saddle the quickest horses in the stable; and one to go to Vernon Hall this moment, the other to Delamere Grove: tell them, whichever first brings me word that my boy is safe, shall have a hundred pounds for the news!"

The horses were quickly saddled, and quickly did the grooms set out—quickly return. Alas! for the poor mother! Lady Vernon sent word "that Captain Delamere had left the Hall, later than usual, with the little earl, in Mrs. Winter's pony-phaeton, and that he had promised to take to Delamere Grove, on its way to the Hermitage." At Delamere Grove the ser-

vants averred that Captain Delamere had returned alone, having, as he said, left the young earl at the lodge; that he had then ordered horses to his carriage, and set off for London, leaving word he should be back by noon the next day.

The miserable mother listened with clasped hands and a bewildered stupified air. She caused the messages to be twice repeated to her. Then, suddenly starting up, she cried, "Where is Gibson? Let me see him this instant."

Gibson was the steward: he came, he listened; he knew not what to think—what to say. Servants generally overrate the importance of the titles and the value of the possessions of those they serve. Some feeling of envy generally attends on inferiority and dependence; and envy always magnifies its object. Gibson thought it not impossible, as he whispered to some of the inferior servants, that "the devil had tempted Captain Delamere in an evil moment to destroy or spirit

away the young earl, since by so doing (if he could but make out a plausible story), he would be Earl of Mandeville, and Mandeville Castle, and all the estates, would come to him. as next heir of entail." Perhaps his suspicions were a little increased by a feeling of personal dislike to Captain Delamere, who had once interested himself actively for a poor gamekeeper whom Gibson had dismissed, and whom Delamere's interest with the countess had reinstated. In several trifles, too, Delamere had unwittingly offended this man, who, at once timid and vindictive, suffered a feeling of illwill to burrow in his heart, which the present occasion brought into action. But to the countess he did not own his suspicion; he advised a little patience, at least till morning, when the captain would probably return. He sent off an express to Delamere's house in town; and then, begging her ladyship to be comforted, he left her to the good offices of Garnet; for he was a timid man, and her frantic grief terrified him.

"Garnet," said the mother, "give me a cloak and bonnet: I must see that woman at the lodge myself."

"Then let me send for her, my lady, she'll come here much quicker than you (ill as you are) can get there."

"Do you think so? Then run—else I am strong! I have no weakness—no pain now but here," and she pressed her hands on her bosom. "Be quick, in mercy, good, dear Garnet, and God will reward you—I too—here, take this." And she threw her her purse.

"La, my lady, I want no reward," said Garnet, courtesying, and pocketing the purse; "but as soon as the woman's feet can carry her she shall be here."

All the servants, taking their tone from Gibson, believed their young lord to be either "murdered or spirited away;" and some, who were really attached to the beautiful, endearing boy, resolved early the next morning to hasten to a magistrate's, and get a warrant to have the "crule, hinfernal willin, reg'lar

Meanwhile, Lady De Mandeville remained in earnest tearful prayer. She rose not from her knees till Garnet announced the woman from the lodge—Mrs. Tweedle.

Mrs. Tweedle, a woman with a coaxing voice, a canting face, and hypocritical averted eyes, entered softly as a cat (having first taken off her shoes in the corridor): she started when the countess, pale as death, in her white wrapper and her long fair hair dishevelled, rose from her knees at the further end of the room, and with a wild fire in her eyes, darted towards her, caught hold of her arm, looked eagerly into her face, and said, "Woman, for God's sake, tell me all you know—tell me where he is, and I will make you rich!"

"La, my lady," said the woman, trembling,
"I don't know nothing, except that Captain
Delamere and my sweet beautiful young lord,
bless his heart, haven't been through the gates
to-night."

"When did you see him last?"

"I see him this morning, bless his noble heart and beautiful face! You know, my lady, Mr. Gibson have give us notice to quit, because, he says, I've too many children for tidiness in the lodge; and I spoke to my young lord, to ask him, my lady, if it was true that your ladyship wouldn't look at my humble petition, to be allowed to stay; for if we go, we shall want bread; and he, like a noble young lord, as he is, promised me in your name, I shouldn't be turned out; and said he'd go to you, my lady, directly he came home again, He gave me his noble word, bless his heart, and——"

"And I will keep it for him," said the countess, sinking on the ground. "Go, woman! I knew nothing of this! Tell Gibson, if you had filled the lodge with wolves, instead of children—had my boy promised you they should stay, I would redeem his pledge! Children! Oh, Father, where is my child? I

too had a child once!" And she looked wildly round.

"Ah, my lady," said Mrs. Tweedle, with her apron to her eyes, "I can feel for you—I know what it is to lose a child—my poor Ben, just the age of my young lord, was buried only yesterday, you knows, my lady."

"I know? no, I did not know it: why was I not told of it?—I would have sent you mourning—I would have tried to comfort you."

"My young lord, as loved my Ben, promised it in your name, my lady; and said as how you'd pay the expenses of the funeral, and the doctor's bills."

"I will—I will—but how can you live now you have lost your child? How can you be so calm?"

"Lord, my lady, the hardship is to live with 'em—all round crying for bread! I've had twelve, my lady, and I've lost five, counting Ben; and I can't grieve much when it pleases God to take one of them away, out of such misery. It's a dreadful thing to see a young lord cut off—because to sich earth's Heaven, as a body may say, but to poor men's babbies it's more like t'other place, my lady. The funeral will cost two pound ten, and the doctor's-stuff one pound five."

"Garnet," said the countess, "give the poor woman all she needs."

Mrs. Tweedle canted forth, "God bless you, my lady, and send you good news of my young lord!" And then she looked cautiously round the splendid apartment, taking an inventory of the gilded furniture and costly baubles with her eye, and wondering how the loss of a child could make such a grand lady give way so; when she herself, as she said, had "wished all hers in Heaven, over and over again!" She looked awed, certainly, but it was not by the solemn anguish of the mother, who, in her reckless despair, had flung herself on the floor in the presence of a stranger, and was groaning in intolerable misery: it was because that

mother was the grand, proud lady of the castle! because the wrapper was trimmed with such costly lace! the shawl, trailing on the ground, was so magnificent! and the carpet on which she lay was of velvet pile!

Mrs. Tweedle had seen human misery before. She had seen a bereaved mother! Alas! who has not? But she had never seen velvet hangings and gilded cornices, nor buhl cabinets, nor alabaster lamps.

"Then, my lady," said Mrs. Tweedle, "for my dear young lord's sake, we may stay in the lodge? Oh! as you have shown mercy to my children, may your own find mercy!"

" Say that again."

" May my young lord find mercy, my lady!"

"Amen!" said the countess. "Stay—take money, clothing. Garnet! see that this woman and her children want for nothing; and tell her to pray for my boy."

The woman gone, the agony of the poor mother was redoubled. When she tried to think, her brain reeled: but as yet no suspicion of Delamere had crossed her mind; the habit of trusting and revering him was too strong. The most improbable ideas suggested themselves. Sometimes she fancied her boy had been suddenly taken ill—that Delamere had hastened to town for advice—and that the Vernons and himself had resolved not to alarm her; but then she remembered that once when such an event had actually happened, Delamere had sent for her, although she was in bed, fancying herself very ill at the time; and that he had promised never to conceal from her anything that concerned her darling. Oh! no, no: Delamere would not keep her one moment in ignorance or suspense.

It was past midnight—but no one thought of going to bed in the castle, for excitement and horror kept many up, and many were deeply interested in the fate of their young lord.

The countess, unable to bear the agony of her fears, again sent for Gibson. "Gibson," she cried, clasping her hands, "tell me—for you are calm, and can judge, and I am well nigh mad, and cannot even think—tell me what you believe to be the cause of my boy's absence, and the different accounts from Vernon Hall and Delamere Grove."

"Alas! my lady, what can I think? except that there never was anything so mysterious: but if Captain Delamere comes home to-morrow—"

- " If! is it not sure he will come to-morrow?"
- " He left word so, my lady."
- "Then he will come !-why do you doubt it?"
- "I do not doubt it, madam, only—at least—far be it from me to doubt Captain Delamere; so honourable a gentleman, and so fond of my young lord as he always seemed."
- "Seemed, Gibson! why he loves my boy as if he were his own."
  - " So I always thought, my lady."
- "Gibson, there is something in your manner I do not understand. You know that which you will not tell me—for God's sake, be candid!"

" Indeed, my lady, I know nothing."

"But you suspect something—speak, I implore you!"

"Why, my lady, when my young lord is missing all at once, so strangely, of course one can't be off suspecting some foul play—but, of course, the question is, who would benefit by the—the—doing away with my young lord? who is heir-at-law, my lady?"

Gibson knew well enough.

The countess started to her feet, her eyes distended, her lips apart, and her hands firmly clenched.

"I own, my lady, I should suspect whoever would come into the title and estates," continued Gibson, not noticing the deadlier hues that stole over the poor mother's face—" but I name nobody, not knowing exactly who is the next heir—only I do know, ambition caused an angel's fall, to say nothing of love and jealousy, though folks do say that Miss Vernon wishes she hadn't thrown herself away, except to a title; and that somebody, who shall be nameless, would sell his soul to be an earl, for her

sake, and to cut out my Lord Stare. And who, my lady, if (which God forbid!) anything did happen to my young lord, who would be next heir?"

"Delamere!" shrieked the poor mother; and she tried to rush to the door, madly, as if in pursuit of him: but suddenly her clasped hands unclosed and fell listlessly by her side, her eyelids dropped, and she sank on the floor, perfectly insensible, like one struck with sudden death.

For some time her attendants believed that life was extinct. Alas! all too soon she revived, wildly stretched out her arms, and called, in all a bereaved mother's anguish, for her boy! her darling! her hopes! her all!

In successive swoons and hysterics the dreadful night passed away. The express Gibson had sent had not returned, not having met with Captain Delamere; and a carriage was ordered to be in readiness to convey the wretched mother to Delamere Grove by noon.

## CHAPTER IX.

Osmond Delamere had just returned from London, to which he had been summoned by his lawyer, respecting some investment of property, and was preparing to set out directly for Mandeville Castle, not being able to understand the extraordinary report of his servants. When, just as he was leaving the house, he saw a female form rushing eagerly, in the scorching sun, across the lawn; her bonnet fell off, but she stopped not to pick it up. A woman hastened after her, but could not keep pace with her. Delamere rushed out to meet her. Flushed with the intense heat, her hair

dishevelled, but the energy of a frenzied terror in every movement, he recognised the invalid of so many years, the Countess of Mandeville.

"Where is my boy?" she cried, when they met, "tell me, where is my child?"

And heedless of the July sun, which poured its noon-day rays on her uncovered head, she stood, her hands pressed upon her bosom, awaiting his reply.

"He is at the castle! I left him there last night—I left him, as usual, with the woman at the lodge."

"No, no! he is not there! you never brought him there. Oh! Delamere, tell me where he is? you cannot have killed him!—oh! no, no!—the angel child who loved you so—the only hope of a widow who so trusted you. Delamere," and she fell on her knees before him, and the large tears poured down her cheeks, "have mercy!"

"Good God!" cried Delamere, "what means all this? I swear to you, by the great

God above, that I delivered Egbert safely at the lodge, and saw the woman come out to receive him. Where is that woman?"

"Oh! sir," said Garnet, coming forward, and trying to raise the countess, who still knelt, "my young lord never came home; and the woman says you never brought him to her."

"And he has not been seen at all?"

"No, sir!" said Garnet, with emphatic significance.

"Rise, I implore you!" said Delamere to the countess, himself pale as death, and scarcely able to sustain his own weight: "Egbert missing! calm yourself! Woman, support your mistress." Osmond himself staggered to a tree, overcome as by a sudden blow: then arousing himself, he cried, "This is some vile plot! some base conspiracy! By the God above, I am as innocent, Lady De Mandeville, as that angel child himself. I loved him!—oh! how I loved him!"

"Ah! yes, you did, you ever did!" said the

countess, dragging herself on her knees to the tree, "I do believe you: but if you have hidden him away—they say you would fain have a title—because Aurelia Vernon, whom you so love, is ambitious, and you are jealous,—and I know not what: so listen—only let me know where he is, that I may go to him, and see him, and hold him to my heart again; and you shall have all—we will resign all—you can say we are dead, you know—do, dear Osmond! If he lives, if I see him, I will forgive all, and so bless you. Oh! the night I have passed!—never! never may you know such an one!—tell me—do tell me!"

"Alas! your reason wanders; else never could you thus suspect me, thus outrage your child's best friend. Have I not watched over that boy as fondly as you could have done?

—have I not spent long nights by his pillow?

—have I not twice saved his life? Shame on such ingratitude and want of faith! But, no! a mother's wild despair excuses all; I will aid, I will comfort; you cannot estrange me now!

you may insult, but you cannot provoke; you may wrong, but you cannot alienate—you can wake no feeling now but deep, deep sympathy. But this is no time for words, we must act—let the magistrates be apprised: let that woman be this moment apprehended. Rise, madam! Oh! God, how my heart bleeds for you—for him!" and taking out a handker-chief, Delamere covered his pale and agitated face, and strove to conceal his irrepressible tears.

"I have wronged, I have outraged you, dear, dear Osmond!" said the countess, catching his hand, and looking up: then, suddenly darting at the handkerchief, with a shriek that rang through the whole grounds, she cried, "Fiend incarnate! it is his! stained with his blood!—my child's blood! God! you have murdered him! in mercy murder me, too, and let me rest! But stop—all you around bear witness," and she turned to the servants, (Delamere's and her own,) whom her shriek had brought to the spot, "This"—and she waved

a handkerchief with several large stains of blood upon it, and with Egbert and a coronet marked in the corners—"this is my child's handkerchief—my child's blood!"

"Let me explain to you how that handkerchief was stained thus," said Delamere, proudly.

"Explain, come! that's a good un," said a constable, who had been summoned by the countess's servants; "but it must be afore a justice, your honour: so please to come along of me."

"I come!" said Delamere: "but, Lady de Mandeville, for your own sake, listen to me."

" Oh! she can't listen, poor lady."

Osmond looked round—the countess had fainted; the blood-stained handkerchief was clasped to her breast; her servants were bearng her to her carriage.

"God have mercy upon her!" murmured Delamere.

"Amen! and you too," said the constable;

for yours, I take it, is the worst plight, your
honour."

"Let me go in my own carriage, man; I cannot walk, followed by all this rabble;" for the arrival of the constables brought half the village to the gates of the Grove.

"Oh! I aint no partikelar objection to a ride, on a hottish day, myself, your honour," said the constable, who had the reputation of a wit; "only you must put up with me for a travelling companion."

Osmond sprang into the carriage, and pulled down the blinds. In a quarter of an hour he was at the nearest magistrate's.

## CHAPTER X.

The magistrate was a dogged, short-sighted, and prejudiced man. He was opposed to Delamere in politics; he disliked him, as elderly men of the old school dislike young men of the new: himself an utilitarian, who prided himself on dressing like a farmer—he despised Delamere as a poet and a dandy; and, to crown all, he, Sir Peter Bullhead, had an old hereditary grudge against the Delameres concerning a right of pathway through a field which no one ever wanted to pass through except to prove his right. Yet he was not a false, nor a dishonourable man; and, in the ready credence he gave to the tale against

Delamere, he was not himself aware how much his dislike of the man had to do with his belief in his guilt. He was a person who never looked beyond the most apparent motives—he did not dream how seldom such are the real incentives to human actions. He argued thus to himself: Delamere is a young man, a genius, and a dandy; ergo he is a spendthrift, and therefore in debt. He is ambitious, ergo he is a madman. He is in love, ergo he is a fool.

The lady of his love, "the beauty of Berkshire," was known to have a viscount in her train, and was said to regret having accepted a man who could not give her a title. The death of a sickly boy would secure to Delamere, as next heir, boundless wealth to satisfy his supposed extravagance, and an earldom to gratify his ambition and his love. The little earl had left Vernon Hall alone with him; the woman at the lodge, who could have, as he said, no interest in the matter, swore that he, Captain Delamere, had not passed through the

gates with the child that night. The victim's handkerchief, stained with blood, was found upon Delamere, together with a clasped knife, also belonging to Egbert, Earl of Mandeville, and on which were several streaks of blood. All this seemed conclusive. Delamere alone could benefit by the little earl's murder. Delamere must be guilty. It did not occur to Sir Peter Bullhead that no man in his senses could have committed such a crime without taking one precaution to conceal it, or to avert suspicion, or, if it did, a poet, a genius, and an exquisite, never seemed to Sir Peter to be a man in his senses.

Delamere was pale and agitated, and could not speak of Egbert without an emotion which pride vainly strove to master, but which only passed for hypocrisy struggling with conscience: he stated that "in passing by some willows, skirting the river, Egbert (and his voice faltered) had wished to cut a stick to make a whistle, and that he, Delamere, proposed waiting for him in the pony-chaise the while; that, having cut his hand in the attempt, he went to him, staunched the blood in the little earl's handkerchief, and bound the wound in his own; and the handkerchief having been marked by the countess for her son, and therefore valued by the child, he put it in his pocket for him; his little cousin also begged him to take care of his knife-the very knife now found upon him; that he then drove as rapidly as he could back to the lodge, which he distinctly saw Egbert enter: he likewise saw the woman at the lodge come forward to welcome him, and, as he supposed (as usual), to walk with him to the castle." An expression of scorn and disbelief was on every lip when Delamere ceased, and the woman, Mrs. Tweedle, cast up her eyes and hands.

After some questioning and cross-questioning, which elicited nothing more of any importance, Sir Peter, with many expressions of regret, said "that he felt it to be his duty to commit Captain Delamere to prison, on a charge of murder, to await his trial for that

crime at the ensuing sessions; for that, to his mind, a stronger case of circumstantial evidence was never, he grieved to say, made out."

At the close of this miserable day, the Countess of Mandeville was in bed with a brain fever; Osmond Delamere was in the county jail at Abingdon; and Aurelia, having retired to her chamber, in a fit of hysterics, at the news of Delamere's apprehension, lingered by the window till she saw Lord Stare in the lane, and, after sundry tender glances, smiles, and wavings of her white hand, she slipped noiselessly down stairs to meet him in the shrubbery, by the light of the rising moon.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE news of Delamere's apprehension ran as an electric shock through all classes, from the most exclusive coteries of the West end to the lowest rabble of St. Giles's. His station, his genius, his elegance, even his personal beauty, had of course excited as much of envy as of admiration (they are plants that grow side by side): whoever thought himself either a genius, an exclusive, an élégant, or a beauty, hated him as a rival; as a successful rival, too.

The frightful crime, and the (to the vulgar) palpable reasons for its commission—the deep interest excited by the bereaved mother (a countess, too!) and the angelic boy (that boy an earl!)-the romantic version in which jealousy of Lord Stare's title originating in Delamere's mad devotion to his lovely affianced, whose beauty well justified his worship-these were the exciting themes on the lips of every one: every paper overflowed with " farther particulars of the late appalling murder;" "interesting details of the late domestic tragedy;" and "private anecdotes." ,In few hearts was there one doubt of Delamere's guilt. The only question seemed to be, whether he had yielded to the insane impulse of the moment, or whether it had been a long-planned crime, to the commission of which all the affectionate attentions he had so long shown to the countess and her child had been only preparatives.

The want of all scheme, all plot, all plausible explanation or excuse, led many to believe that, in a fit of jealousy of Lord Stare, maddened at once by love and by ambition — the child—sole bar between him, high rank and boundless wealth—alone and at his mercy, the woods waving darkly around, as though to

screen, the waters gliding by to wash away all traces of the deed—the evil spirit had stolen into a heart prepared for his reception by those kindred friends Envy and Ambition—and he, true son of Cain, had slain the trusting, gentle child!

If the lunatic, the lover, and the poet, are of imagination all compact, people readily believed the lover and the poet might be the lunatic too. The world's inmates turned, for awhile, from the contemplation of their own beauties and excellencies, to execration of him who formerly had eclipsed them all—to horror at the fate of the victim, and curiosity, if not interest, about the result of the trial.

Some declared that they had long suspected that Delamere had no kindly feeling towards a boy who stood between him and an earldom.

- " How should he have?" said one.
- " Very unnatural," replied another.

As if all natures were the same; as if feelings natural to the meanly ambitious pettifogger, who was judging him, would not have been unnatural to Osmond Delamere. Yet there were some hearts that never for one moment admitted a doubt of Delamere's innocence: his old housekeeper, who had known him from boyhood; all his immediate attendants, who loved him with the romantic fervour genius always excites, when it is (as I believe is far more often the case than the world wots of) attended by generosity of spirit and charity of heart—these would have died with him or for him.

Men who had stood behind his chair as menials, who had given him labour for hire (a fair exchange), women who had swept his floors, and lighted his fires and drudged in his household—these refused comfort, and met to weep, to vindicate, and to plan his rescue; and men who had called themselves his "dearest friends," who had sat at his board, ridden his horses, borrowed his money, and risen by his interest—these, in their palace-like clubs, were betting on the probable result of

the trial and noting down for what wines, horses, and articles of *virtu* they would bid, if, as they expected, (and almost hoped,) there should be a sale of Delamere's effects.

Among the foremost of these was Dempster, now returned from his tour, and who like a true parasite, requiring to cling to something, and finding Delamere, as he said, "done for," proceeded forthwith to assume—in lieu of Delamere's quiet elegance of dress and manner—Lord Stare's "flash, bang-up" coats, low-crowned hats, oaths, and sporting phrases, and to toady and imitate Lord Stare, much to the dismay of the devoted Mrs. Dempster Tadpole, who saw herself suddenly neglected for gambling-houses, sporting-meetings of allkinds, and indeed every scene of fashionable vice.

Mrs. Winter had written to Delamere several long soi-disant consolatory letters, but somehow, after their perusal, he always felt more than usually depressed; his case never appeared to him so hopeless, as after she had undertaken to comfort and encourage him. She

had visited him, too, and from her he had learnt how all the world forsook, loathed, despised him, and believed in his guilt. She had shewn him (with apparent indignation at their authors) the bitterest articles against him; she had told him, that the poor Countess of Mandeville was not expected to recover; and she had finished by saying, that, guilty or not guilty, she would never forsake him.

The doubt thus implied was as the draught of gall to one thirsting for justice. He called her back, to hear his solemn justification; but she would not hear, she waved her hand and left him to feed on all the poisons she had left him.

His case appeared daily more desperate; an immense reward had been offered for the discovery of the body, of the clothes, or of any part of the remains of the murdered child.

Footsteps, corresponding to the size of Delamere's and Egbert's feet, were discovered near the water's edge, just where Delamere had said the boy had cut a stick to make a whistle: the ground was much trampled, and on the large dock-leaves several drops of blood had dried. The river having been dragged, several articles of clothing (identified as Egbert's) were found, having been made into a bundle and sunk by means of a large stone.

The immense reward secured the most indefatigable exertions, and before the end of a fortnight, the headless body of a little boy (whose arms, too, had been severed from it), wrapped in a shirt and cloak of Egbert's, and whose stockings were marked with a coronet, were discovered buried in a remote part of the grounds.

All search for the head and arms having proved ineffectual, an inquest was held, and the remains, though fast decomposing, were identified by several witnesses, as those of Egbert, Earl of Mandeville: and a verdict of wilful murder was returned against Osmond Delamere.

The lodge-keeper was the person who found the remains, and who received the reward, which secured to him and to his family comparative affluence for life.

Never had a case of such appalling and intense excitement occupied the attention of the public. Lives, anecdotes, secret histories, private correspondences, and correct likenesses of Captain Delamere, were sold by thousands and tens of thousands. Phrenology groaned aloud for a cast of his head, and one eminent professor of that art, having bribed the jailers for a peep at him while asleep, moulded a cast from memory, in which the organ of murder was frightfully developed. Still with some, (ladies particularly,) who believed that love and jealousy had urged him to this crime, he was "Poor dear Delamere!" Even in prison, verses and love-letters and bouquets were sent him; and, had he been so inclined, his solitude might have been enlivened by visits from some fair ones, with whom his present dreadful notoriety was a sort of fame.

And for himself, what were the feelings of this once fêted, idolized, admired Delamere? How, as a disgraced and execrated outcast,—
(whose honour, once his proudest boast, was
stained with the foulest, blackest of blots!)—
how did he drag on his dreadful existence?
How did he see circumstance upon circumstance, and evidence upon evidence, closing
around, ready to crush him in life, and to blacken
his noble name through all after time?

There is a beautiful story, called the "Iron Shroud," of a man whose prison walls are described as closing gradually upon him day by day, till, at length, they meet and crush him—and he is aware of his impending fate, and has no power to shun it! At first Delamere's feelings were much like that wretched prisoner's; and, after he had been informed that the remains of the child he had so loved and cherished had been found,—to acute despair for himself was added affectionate regret for his little cousin and the bereaved mother; and his feelings, which at first seemed akin to frenzy, took the gentler form of deep dejection.

Everything he did, everything he said, everything he ate, and, in short, each detail of his life, was made public. And Mrs. Winter sent him every bitter and garbled account she met with, of his conversation and demeanour.

At length, that fever of the soul, induced by the sense of injustice, and by the boiling indignation which was denied all natural vent, brought on a dangerous illness. It was feared that death would rob justice of its due, that the public would be cheated of the exciting trial, to which it looked, as the Romans of yore to their combats of gladiators (only that cruelty, like other passions, requires more refined and more highly-seasoned food in modern than in ancient times), and never was a beloved monarch's recovery the object of such anxious enquiry and eager solicitude as was poor Osmond Delamere's, who was only expected to escape a natural, that he might die an ignominious death. "Youth and a good constitution," as the novelists say, favoured him, and the approach of his trial found him

convalescent. Bodily illness had subdued much of the violent chafing of his spirit—his mood was described as calm and self-possessed. The most eminent lawyers attended him, but it was understood that he meant to speak his defence himself. It was reported, too, that he shewed much more anxiety about his name after death, than the preservation of his life; that he vehemently maintained his innocence; and had been heard to declare, that death would have no terrors for him, if he could feel sure that after death justice would make his innocence apparent to the world.

This indifference to life excited much interest, and was accounted for by the circumstance of Aurelia Vernon's marriage with Lord Stare. The world saw the marriage blazoned in the papers, but generally knew not the circumstances under which it took place, and which were not quite as honourable to the bride as her friends would have wished them.

It has been seen, that any little preference she was capable of feeling was felt for Lord Stare. He, unprincipled and profligate, was enamoured of her beauty; and Marcus being safely embarked, and Sir William, an invalid, rarely at home, and supposed to be too ill to pursue or resent, he proposed to Aurelia to escape with him to the Continent, where, he said, they would be married. Aurelia, vain and inexperienced, liking the romance of an elopement, with little delicacy, and no doubt of his honour, anxious, too, to escape all trouble about Delamere, and the bore of playing a part, consented.

Sir William being supposed at Brighton, few precautions were deemed necessary. Lord Stare, proud of his triumph, drove the beauty to a celebrated Bond Street Hotel, where a set of brother roues and coxcombs were lounging in a splendid coffee-room, and saw his lordship alight, and heard him desire private apartments, and inquire for the first Boulogne steamer.

<sup>&</sup>quot; By George, there's Stare !--whom has he got with him?"

<sup>&</sup>quot; Can't see for her veil, George. What a

bore! But she's a deuced fine figure, eh!" said Captain Simper.

"And fine foot and ankle, faith!" said Dempster.

"By George! it's a girl I've seen with Delamere—lucky dog that Stare. See! she has raised her veil!—how beautiful she is!—By George, why she's beautiful Miss——"

"Hush!" whispered some one, glancing at a pale elderly man reading a paper; and who, attracted by the commotion and rush to the window, rose to see the cause of the excitement: his eye fell on the lady and her lover. His pale cheek grew of a deadlier pallor: he caught up a horsewhip belonging to Simper, said, with much self-possession, "Excuse me, Simper, lend me this for a few moments," and was hastening across the room, when Lord Stare, having consigned Aurelia to a private room, came to boast a little of what he had achieved.

He came in with all the swagger of a boasting roué: his hat, which he always wore of a different shape to any one else, having a crown about two inches high with a very broad brim, being stuck on one side. Rubbing his hands, he exclaimed, "Ah! Simper, my boy! how do? Riskall! how are you? Ogle, by Jove! are you here? Ah! Dempster, you old Benedict! how have you escaped from your wife's apronstring, eh? No iron gyves of wedlock for me—love's rosy chain for ever!—Wish me joy, my boys!"

"Of a horsewhipping, never so well deserved, I believe," said Sir William Vernon, approaching him.

Lord Stare staggered, and turned deadly pale.

"Before I chastise you, as I believe you deserve, answer me one question—that Lady, whom I recognise as my daughter,—is she also your wife?"

"I make every allowance for a father's feelings," faltered Lord Stare; and then, seeing Sir William about to collar him, he added, retreating hastily a few steps, "she has honoured me by her acceptance; I was just going to get a special license, and came to beg my friend Dempster to go with me, and to be present at the ceremony."

Liar! trembled on the white lips of Sir William Vernon, but he mastered himself. "Supposing that true," he said, "how can you excuse the inducing a young lady of my daughter's station to violate every rule of decorum, and consent to a private wedding with you, as if she were not (as she is) your superior in every respect, but some one you were ashamed to own to the world as your choice? How do you account for conduct no man of honour or delicacy could have adopted?"

"Love! love! is my sole excuse. You, sir, were away—love is so impatient! I feared there might be delays: let my passion plead my excuse. I am willing to make any apology you require, for not having formally proposed for Miss Vernon. Permit me now to implore the honour of her hand, and your forgiveness!"

Sir William paused for a moment, nervously clutching the horsewhip; then coldly said, "Attend me at once to get a special license. Had not my young daughter compromised her dignity by the step she has taken, I would rather see her in her coffin than the wife of one who would be a blackguard if he dared."

"Nay, Sir William! you are severe: but I I make every allowance for a father's feelings."

"Silence!—Dempster and Simper, be so obliging as to accompany us; perhaps you will witness the ceremony, and grace the wedding breakfast?" he added, with a bitter smile.

"Invited by you, Sir William, of course we will do ourselves that honour," replied Simper, with a glance of contempt at Lord Stare, which Dempster immediately copied.

Sir William, proudly, left the coffee-room.

"So," said Lord Stare, "I'm doomed to go in double harness at last. I've run my head into a fine noose, haven't I, Duff? haven't I, Hastings?"

But Duff and Hastings were gentlemen, and men of honour; they deigned no reply to a man, who had not only acted like a blackguard, in carrying off a gentleman's daughter, (perhaps they might have forgiven that,) but, having acted like a blackguard, he had allowed himself to be called one; and that they could not but resent.

"By George!" said Stare, cocking his low brimmed hat, "those sticks seem inclined to cut me. So, by George! Pll cut my stick; and, directly I'm moored, I'll be off to Boulogne."

The ceremony was performed—the collation despatched—Sir William took a cold leave of his son-in-law and his daughter, who set sail directly for Boulogne. Sir William repaired to his club, where he soon forgot the important event of the morning. Nor did the hand which had just given his daughter to a titled scoundrel tremble, as he dealt the cards.

Before night, the story of this new marriage force, with many curious variations, was the theme of every club-house; and another proof was added to the many extant, that a boasting bully is seldom a man of any physical or moral courage.

## CHAPTER XII.

LADY VERNON was quite consoled for her daughter's disgraceful and undutiful conduct, when she found that her *escapade* had ended so providentially.

Aurelia was now a viscountess, and Lady Vernon could not be very angry with a viscountess. She could see no blot on her daughter's brow, because her coronet dazzled her eyes. And an event which ought to have burnt the mother's cheek with the hectic of shame, only inflated her heart with maternal vanity. Never had Lady Vernon given herself so many airs as since this forced and disgraceful marriage.

With regard to Delamere, in order to avoid all necessity for appearing interested about his fate, she professed to believe in his guilt, and appeared to consider the ruin of his fame a sort of pedestal on which she could raise herself, and declaim on her own virtues and her abhorrence of his guilt.

The Countess of Mandeville still lay in imminent danger, and seldom tortured by the consciousness of what was passing.

Mrs. Winter, much to Osmond's annoyance, professed, that she was exerting an interest which would avail to save his life; a boon which, he frankly told her, would be odious to him if his honour fell a sacrifice.

"Oh, Osmond!" she answered, "life is sweet to all, as you will find, when you look on this awful case as it really stands. Then you will thank your poor Eveleen, if her interest has availed to get your sentence commuted to transportation for life!"

"But, why should not truth prevail?" groaned Osmond; "why do you take it for

granted that I, innocent, as the God of justice knows I am, must yet be found guilty?— Speak, do you believe me guilty, Eveleen?"

Mrs. Winter made no reply, but she buried her face in her handkerchief.

"Oh! if you, my best, my most constant friend, so wrong me, little indeed can I hope from a prejudiced world!"

"Osmond!" cried Mrs. Winter, rushing to him, and kneeling before him, her face still buried in her handkerchief—

"' I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart;
But I know that I love thee, whatever thou art!'

only I would have you prepared: if even to my fond spirit, which so pants to see you justified, your guilt seems too, too clear,—if I, who would die to believe you innocent, yet think you guilty,—who will think more leniently of you, who will not condemn, when your Eveleen is forced to doubt? This is not the first time I have knelt at your feet, Osmond. Do you remember when you spurned me? Who, of all your followers and worshippers,—who, in

your dreadful anguish, has not forsaken you?—
one alone—the woman you rejected! Ah! if
you had listened to me then, Eveleen as a
guardian angel would have watched your
heart! No mad ambition, ever the parent of
crime——"

"Good God! madam," exclaimed Osmond, rising in the rage of a lion who has been goaded on to madness, "your words are poisoned darts! You may mean to comfort, but you only drive to frenzy. I entreat that you will never concern yourself again about a life which I should loathe, were disgrace its attendant. With dishonour seated like a nightmare on my heart, I could not live. I believe I should impiously put an end to my miserable being; and I would rather die a felon's death, with a spotless soul, and a martyr faith, sure that the Crucified on Earth will welcome me to a heavenly home, than weakly slink as a suicide into my God's presence, to be driven thence for ever among kindred felons! My choice seems to be between the felon's death and the felon's

crime, which I (while I doubt whether I could resist the temptation) yet consider suicide to be. It will be no mercy to rob me of the only guiltless exit fate offers from misery like mine! As for what you call my rejection of you, Eveleen, even now, I do not regret it. The love whose confidence a false world can lie away-whose faith in me is not stronger than the evidence of a congregated world-is not the love my heart can ever regret. Forgive me, Eveleen," he added, reseating himself, with a heavy sigh, while an unwonted moisture rose to his flashing eyes-" forgive me-you mean kindly; but any doubt of my innocence is a deadly wrong, and any wish to doom me to drag on a dishonoured life, a cruel mercy! And now, as from what you, even you, betray as lurking in your heart, of suspicion-nay, certainty-of my guilt, I see there is no hope in man, do not disturb or excite the thoughts I would fain collect, by words that seem to set my brain on fire. For all you have done for me, or would have done, may God reward you as you deserve, Eveleen!—And now, leave the victim of an unjust and merciless world alone, with a just and merciful Father!"

"Ob, no, no! I cannot leave you!"

"You must,—your fair fame will suffer.— Eveleen, a wretch's thanks and blessing attend you,—farewell!"

So saying, he snatched away his hand, rose, and, hastily retreating, shut himself into a small inner room, and bolted the door. Mrs. Winter then quitted the prison.

## CHAPTER XIII.

On the evening of this exciting and painful interview, when prayer had brought down, as it ever does, the Dove of Peace from Heaven into the breast of the mourner on earth, Delamere was roused from the preparation of his defence, by his jailer's admitting three men into his presence.

The evening was a very rainy one, and his visitors were so enveloped in cloaks and wrappers, that at first he did not recognize them. When suddenly the foremost, one of gigantic size, wrapped in a huge macintosh, strode forward, caught Delamere's hand, and exclaimed,

"Delamere, my dear fellow! how are you?
I'm only just recovered from a severe illness,
or I should have been here before: I'm none
of your summer friends; they've all deserted
you, I doubt not; but here am I, to offer you
my counsel and comfort!"

"Thank you, Mr. Burridge," said Delamere, his eyes glistening at this unexpected proof of interest; "pray be seated. Who are your companions?"

"Oh! only Tim and Macbotcher; they were anxious to offer their services in your distress: to say the truth, I'm still so weak, I couldn't travel without Tim; and Macbotcher, having some Scotch crotchet or other in his head about second sight, left me no peace till I consented to frank him down to you."

"Crochet, indeed, my gallant Coptin, it's na crochet! Wait a wee bit till the fit's upon me, and I'll tell ye a'; but business before pleasure. I'm come to kill twa birds wi' ain stane, Coptin: to comfort yer puir heart wi' my bit o' second sight, and to axe you whether I canna do ye a gude turn, and turn a gude penny mysel', by taking yer meesure for a braw new black suit?—Ye maun needs ha' one to look bonny at yer ain grand trial and a', and sure it's better to pit siller into the pocket of a known friend than of a mon that, seeing yer under a cloud, Coptin, may tak advantage!"

"Of course," said Delamere, smiling; "there, take some of those things as a pattern; that will save me the bore of being measured: that is all?"

"It's nae preceesely a'," said Macbotcher, scratching his shaggy red head; "but I'm unco afraid of giving offence, Coptin."

"Oh, never fear,-speak out!"

"Why, then, I dinna think but that a' wull gang right: but if it did na, ye see, Coptin, we must a' dee, suner or later, and deeing young, a mon is saved a world o' trouble. I wud na hurt yer feelings for a' the world. I think ye wul na need it; I think ye wul na be hanged, mon; but, if ye were to be, ye'll need a shroud, I'm thinking, Coptin, and I've served my

time at that trade too, and I'm a good hond at it; and as I 've a gude wife and mony bairns, I must e'en turn a penny ony gate I can."

"Very true," said Delamere, laughing; "now for the crotchet. If it is in my power to choose my shroud-maker, I select you."

"Ye shall ha' na cause to repent, Coptin. But it's nae crochet—it's nae crochet!" said Macbotcher, coming forward, his red eyes rolling and flashing, his plaid cloak hanging about him like an ancient seer's, and waving his arm with a not ungraceful energy, "Coptin Delamere, Mr. Burridge spake nae sa disrespectful o' the gude gift: it has come dune frae father to son in the house of Macbotcher thro' a thousand generations, and never yet did a Macbotcher foretil what did na come to pass."

"And what do you foretel about me?" said Delamere, with a mournful smile; but weak from recent illness, and excited by writing his defence, his heart fluttered, and a mysterious awe crept into it.

" I see it a', I see it a', like a picture before me," said Macbotcher, looking wild and aghast, "but I munna tell ye a', only ye'll nae be honged or quartered, mon! and nae blot o' dishonor will rest on your gude name. Ah! it's a bonny sight to look upon. There's a grand trial, an awful trial, and a braw judge, and a learned jury, and a sight of lairds and leddies! and a' Lunnun town seems alive. Ah, the sinfu' idle callants! and the lazy queans! a' leaving their ain wark! Oh, the wicked generation! It's weel, tho', I dinna see my prentice Sawney, nor my ain bairns, among 'em! Aweel! aweel! ye'll na be hanged and quartered, mon! Ah! I see you now in the new black claiths I've made ye. Oh, the braw fit o' them! Ye'll na need a shroud, mon, but I can mak it a' the same-one's sure to want it suner or later-it's weel to have it by one. It's a' ganging the gude gait. The idle queans and varlets are shouting-yer acquitted, mon!" "Oh, look, look again!" exclaimed Delamere, beside himself with a sort of mysterious excitement.

"The scene is a' changed, mon! I see ye buccling by an altar wi' a bonny, bonny lassie! a bonnie lassie, indeed! as neat as a button-hole, and as tight as a stitch! and further on, I see ye wi' the wee bairns around ye. It is a' over—I see nae mair. A sunny mist comes on, and it forms into a rainbow. A' will go weel, my gallant Coptain, wi' ye! ye'll na be hanged or quartered, mon!" So saying, Macbotcher, in a violent perspiration, sunk on a seat, buried his face in his hands, and seemed for some minutes almost insensible.

Delamere rose, poured out a tumbler of wine, forced him to drink it, and then returned to Burridge, leaving Macbotcher to the tender attentions of Tim.

"Although I've no faith in such crackbrained superstition, Delamere," said Burridge, "I have great faith in your innocence, and the justice of God; and so I came to see if I could serve you in any way; and, if you're short of cash, my purse (a good long one, thanks to my being as prudent as a lover and man of my pretensions can be) is at your service; besides, as Bab says, I can see further than most men; and if my intellect, or any little eloquence nature has gifted me with, can help you, make free with it. Bab declares Sergeant T- and Sir W. Fare nothing to me, when once I'm roused. I suppose, not being a counsellor, they wouldn't let me defend you in court; but I might be near to prompt you; or I could draw up a defence for you. Give me a glass of wine: I had the nicest ducks, with green peas, you ever saw, for dinner, and scarcely tasted them, because I feared the gates would be closed."

"I am very, very grateful to you, Mr. Burridge, and your visit is a real comfort to me. Although I am not superstitious, there is something in Macbotcher's prophecy and your faith which has cheered me more than anything which has occurred since my imprisonment; but I have engaged the first legal assistance, and my de-

fence is almost ready, and, if I have strength, I shall speak it myself. In that respect, therefore, I need not trouble you: with money, too, I am amply provided; but the voice of trust and friendship is very welcome to me here; I have not heard it often of late, and whenever you can come to me I shall rejoice to see you; but, first, know you aught of Jessica?"

"No: the little fool rejected me! That's all I know of her, and all I wish to know: except that, at her request, I've been dancing attendance on my cousin Lord M——, till I'm tired to death, and at last have got him to promise that extravagant, gambling old dog, Sir William, the first vacant——"

"How noble of you, Burridge!" said Delamere, his eyes sparkling; and then he added, in a sadder tone, "and of Jessica you know positively nothing?"

"Nothing — but that the little simpleton positively refused me—and that's all I want to know; and I wish I didn't know that!" "And Miss Barbara, the lady who shewed better taste—or perhaps I should say, Mrs. Burridge?"

"Not yet-but I hope, one day, you'll wish e joy. The truth is, Pris caught a fever, and her sisters, waiting on her, caught it too. I warned Bab (for I have great foresight, and some medical knowledge): however, women never will listen to one, and Bab has a heart as warm as an oven, and is a first-rate nurse: so one night that Pris was worse, Miss Bab sits up with her: the next day, when I called, I thought my poor girl looked ill. One can't be angry with a girl for having a warm heart, and being a good nurse; in short, it's a great saving and blessing if a wife is one; for health and strength don't last for ever; and so I, fool as I was, - being an engaged man, and she so fine a creature, and I, as you know, of an ardent nature, instead of being angry, going home and taking twelve of Morrison's pills, as I should have done, besides

using all sorts of preventives, I staid nursing and petting and sitting close to Bab; and the next day we were both in bed with the fever. It was some weeks before we either of us got up again; I dare say our wish to see each otherin short, our love-kept up the fever. Bab's still very weak, so I've sent her and Pris down to Ramsgate, at my expense, for a time; and hearing of your trouble, I thought I could not do better than come and settle myself near you, till the trial's over-while Bab recovers her strength; for, much as I'm in love, I couldn't fancy being married, if you were just going to be hanged! But now, Delamere, just let me ask you, if any of your fine fashionable friends would have taken all this trouble about you? Do you think that they would, any of them, leave such a woman as Bab (if there were such another, and they were in love, like me, if they were capable of being in love), do you think they would give talents (if they had any), or money (if they could borrow any), to assist you? No, no, they'd bet on the issue of your trial—go to a ball the very day you were hanged! And here have I come out in the rain, at the risk of my life, and with a famous appetite left an excellent dinner, and here I am; and would be, if it were my wedding-day—only then Bab should be here too!"

Delamere could not restrain a smile, at the mixture of kindness and bearishness this speech betrayed.

"If Macbotcher proves a true prophet, and acquittal and a fair-haired bride await me," he said, taking Burridge's hand, "perhaps we may yet make a joint wedding of it. Here, Tim, my old friend, drink this glass of wine."

"That I'm proud to do,—and health and long life to your honour. As I said at a Radical meeting, where one wanted to prove you'd done wrong, acause you was a harrisstocrack—I said, as no man was guilty till he wor proved so,—and you, sur, was not only a

meristration. But a humistocrack of hinteleck—and when 'on said I was only a servent, I said all man is begands, according to nature and metallic justic, both he has works and he has sucke and he has sucke and he has sucke and he has sucke and the meeting to have in a sender point—and the meeting broke up with great confusion."

"Min, so I should think, Tim," said Dele-

"Thu, where are the things: " growled Burnilly " you must control your tangue."

"I never speaks till I'm speken to, sur,"
sant lime: "but certain, then, natur and justs
guille are tangen, and ——."

"No more of your tangue—there's a much laster tangue that I bought for Capcain Delamers. I thought you might not get good fare here, so I got this myself, and door enough those metally people at the last made me pay for it; and here are the ducks; I hadn't time to est—unly one wing and

one leg gone, you see; and the wine I had ordered \_\_\_\_\_"

"Surely, we had better sup together, then," said Delamere, whose spirits were much raised by Burridge's visit, Macbotcher's second-sight, and Tim's defence.

"No, my dear fellow," said Burridge, "it's now twenty minutes past eight — I'm still ailing a little, and I promised my poor, fond Bab never to be out after half-past eight: I never break my word, even to a woman. So God bless you, Delamere! keep up your spirits — I shall come to you to-morrow, my boy. But I must take care of myself for Bab's sake."

Delamere wrung the strange being's hand affectionately.

"Gude night, Coptin," said Macbotcher;

"put your troost in God, mon, and dinna
fear! the chiels 'll na hae their wull: like the
lave, ye'll nae be honged and quartered,
mon."

"I am very anxious to believe your prophecy, Macbotcher," said Delamere, slipping two guineas into his hand.

"Aweel, aweel, I did nae expect it, coptin," said Macbotcher (taking out an old leathern purse from a very remote pocket, and dropping in the gold), "but if there is ain place where an unexpectit guest is na, for a' that, unwelcome a' thegither, it's in a puir mon's poorse! And I've a gude-wife to provide for, and many bairns to feed, coptin. I'll make ve a braw new suit, after these," he added, tucking a bundle under his arm; "and as for the shroud, if it's the wull o' Providence you should need it, which (after what I've seen) I canna and wunna believe, I'll make it as braw and as reasonable, aye, and as gude a fit, as if it wor for a live mon, instead of for one who can make no complaint, nor tell no tales, for three pound,-it shall be as braw a shroud as ye ever saw! Ye wunna need it; but it's weel to have it by one, and it does a mon na

harm to be put in mind o' his latter end in this sinfu' world!"

Tim only humbly doffed his cap, and twitched his forelock. They were gone; and, with a lighter heart and clearer head, Delamere returned to his defence.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Poor Jessica Thornton! While we have been watching the maternal agonies of the Countess de Mandeville, witnessing the discomfiture of Lord Stare and his forced marriage, and hovering in Delamere's cell, listening to his three rough but honest comforters (Burridge, Macbotcher, and Tim), she, poor girl, has been obliged, for the first time, to venture forth alone into the world, unprotected, save by the modest reserve and innate dignity of her character.

She, who before had scarcely taken a walk alone, was obliged alone to embark, alone to disembark on a foreign coast, alone to resist imposition, or alone to submit to it: to refuse offers of services, which would have led to an acquaintance with some old ogling merchant or young smirking clerk, or else herself to face the extorting commissionaires, who seized on her luggage as soon as the custom-house officers released it; and the emissaries from all the different hotels, who fiercely disputed, like true birds of prey, the possession of this scared and timid dove.

At length an old fellow, more cunning than the rest, decided her, by speaking less vehemently but more kindly than the others, and pointing to a clean-looking inn on the quai. Jessy followed him, and gladly took refuge there, both because it was close at hand, and because its humble exterior seemed well suited to her slender purse.

Here the poor girl was shewn into a small but very clean bed-room, with a bricked floor waxed and varnished. Here she was alone; and, to the unhappy, the loneliness of solitude is more welcome than that of a crowd. Here she sat down; and shutting out the little foreign bed-room from her view, by burying her face in her hands, she saw

"Not that which was, nor that which should have been, But the old mansion, and th' accustomed hall, And the remember'd chambers, and the place, The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade, All things pertaining to that place and hour, And him who was her destiny, came back, And threw themselves between her and the light: What business had they there at such a time?"

The evening sun, much brighter and more glaring than she had ever seen it in England, gushed painfully and searchingly into the little room; and the ornamental muslin curtains were too scanty to be of much service in excluding the rays.

That evening sun-set! ah! it has a depressing effect on any one doomed, from whatever cause, to chambered loneliness: it seems at once to invite and to mock: it brings back the memory of happy irresponsible childhood, when basking to the last moment in its dying glory, after the short prayer and hymn of praise, we went to bed with that sun. Alas! for later times, when we light up the darkness, as if we needed artificial light to see thereby to watch and weep! No, no: not even the passionate ramble of early love, by the silver moon—the triumph the pen achieves by the midnight lamp—or beauty's first conquests in the lighted hall, are worth the rosy slumber of the little child, who falls asleep, his Saviour's name upon his lip, and around whose bed friends watch and angels pitch their tents.

So thought poor Jessica; who now first awoke to all the loneliness of her situation! She dashed away her tears, and looked from her somewhat lofty window on the quai below. The dark, active, animated people, the women, their Madras handkerchiefs wound coquettishly round their heads, the vivacity of gesture, and the foreign accent of the distant hum of voices, all reminded Jessica, that she was far, far from her island home. As she looked upon the expanse of waters before her, she almost repented of

having put a cold, deep gulf between herself and all she loved: but, as she recalled each familiar face, and found that memory dwelt with passionate regret on none so fondly as on Delamere's—Delamere, the affianced of another—she rejoiced at her escape. She raised her eyes to the blue heavens, and her thoughts to God. She felt that the prayer of faith rises as buoyantly through foreign as through native skies—that space which separates us from all earthly friends, often brings us nearer to our Father in Heaven! She left the window, resolved to be content.

She then rang for tea; made some inquiries as to where the convent was situated; wrote a note to the superior to announce her arrival, and her intention of waiting upon her the next morning; and then retired to her little French bed, where she soon fell fast asleep.

The next morning, early, after a few minutes walk, she reached the convent. The lady abbess, an immense tall and stout woman, whose appearance announced the good-humoured gourmande, received her kindly. The reality of a convent soon put to flight all its preconceived romance. A square building, surrounded by a high wall, and with a formal garden, disappointed her fancy, full of "dark solitudes and awful cells." No beautiful nuns or "angel-faced" novices met her view; the sisters were generally plain, dark, middle-aged women, with a bustling, housewifery air: there was no solemn pomp, no graceful despair, no pallid loveliness-all seemed most vulgarly well fed and good-humoured, and all were gentle, coaxing, and garrulous. But comfort and kindness are more welcome than solemn grandeur and tragic reserve, to the dependent exile's heart. The pensionnaires, Jessica's future pupils, taking their tone from the nuns, were all coaxing, obliging, and active. There was little beauty among them, for their diet was too greasy and complicated to be wholesome, and their life was sedentary. You saw none of the lily and rose complexions, and elastic forms, which exercise, country air, and very

simple food, secure to so many of our young school-girls.

As all were dressed in an uniform peculiar to the convent, outward finery, one of the great inlets to vanity, selfishness, ambition and envy, was closed. The nuns made talents quite secondary to goodness, piety, and humility; with them the best always ranked before the most clever; and therefore Jessica found no supercilious, conceited airs, but all were kindly, attentive, and affectionate. It was arranged that she should be at the convent every morning by ten, dine there, and return by five in the afternoon. English, drawing, and music, she was called upon to teach. She found her pupils very ignorant, but very docile; and she returned home (home to a foreign inn!) well pleased with the unromantic convent of St. Marie.

After some vain, fatiguing lodging-hunts, unsuccessful, for the apartments she saw were too remote from the convent, too grand, and far too dear, she closed with an offer of Madame de la Cour, the mistress of the little inn, to let her have a room, au quatrième, looking on the quai, and to supply her with such meals as she might require. This the woman agreed to do at a very moderate rate; and Jessica was thus as comfortable as her circumstances admitted of, because she was saved all marketing and all trouble and expense of a servant. She was within a very short walk of the convent: there was a back way out of the inn, through an unfrequented street. She could behold from her window the white sails from her native land, which seemed like the wings of the bird of Hope. Without being seen, or coming in contact with any one, she could see all that passed on the busy quai. She had the privilege of walking in a garden Madame De la Cour had in the suburbs, and of enjoying its profusion of fruits and flowers; and, above all, she had an occasional glimpse of that solace of England's many exiles and many wanderers, which wings its rapid flight to every distant haunt. Dear as the messenger-bird who brings tidings to the Brazilian from the land of souls, it comes to us

with news from the land of the heart:—I mean thee, thou thrice welcome "Messenger" of Galignani!

For some weeks Jessica kept the even tenour of her way, beloved at the convent, and treated with a French mixture of affection and reverence at her little inn. The good sisters sighed to think so fair and sweet a creature should be a "castaway;" and one, sister Marie, began, with much affectionate interest, to sound the depths of her Protestantism, and to dream of a convert. To this sister, Jessica was peculiarly interesting, because she recalled the dearest friend of her youth, " now to the dust gone down," She would look at Jessica till her eyes filled with tears; and, one day, having insisted on her perusal of a small illuminated life of some favourite saint, Jessica was surprised to see written therein, "Jessica Vernon, from her own William."

The names, Jessica, Vernon, William, all so familiar to her, made her start. "Who was this Jessica Vernon?" she asked, while her cheek grew pale, she scarce knew why: "My name, too, is Jessica!"

"Strange enough!" said the nun, "for your face is as like hers as your name. She was my dearest, earliest friend: her tale was a tragic one; but if you will join me at the hour of recreation, in the garden, I will both tell you her story, as briefly as I can, and shew you her picture."

When Jessica, her heart beating with a mysterious anxiety, put her arm in sister Marie's, the latter led her to a garden-seat, took out of her ample pocket a small oval miniature, wiped away her own tears which fell fast on it, and handed it to Jessica.

Jessica started: her own face, in a mirror, could scarce have been more faithfully rendered. The same long gold hair—the same large blue eyes and dark lashes—the same small soft features and bright red lips—and the same faint blush on the pearl-white skin.

" Is it not yourself?" she said: " strange, if

God has made two faces of a different stock so much alike, when no two leaves of different trees resemble each other. I must tell her story rapidly," she said, " and without comment,-it harrows my feelings too much! We were fellow-boarders in the same convent, and the fondest of friends. She, Jessica de St. Julienne, was the orphan of a French officer and an English lady-both had died abroad of a fever, and she, at ten years old, was placed in this convent: she had a very small income, just enough to defray her pension; and my aunt, her guardian, advised her, when she was some years older, to commence her noviciate. In the mean time she spent some weeks with my aunt and myself at Bordeaux. Here a young travelling Englishman, Mr. William Vernon, (Jessica started, turned pale, but spoke not,) saw and adored her. As he owned that he had nothing, the match would have been madness,-so said my aunt; and impious too, exclaimed all who knew that he was a Protestant.

and she destined to the cloister - but ' love will still be Lord of all,' as some English poet says: they married privately, but according to both the Protestant and Catholic forms, for Jessica was proud and virtuous as she was fair. In some months the marriage could be concealed no more. She remained with us, and gave birth to a little girl, christened Jessicathe father, who doated on it, insisted on rearing it in the Protestant faith; and to my poor friend's weak compliance, I trace her subsequent misery. She lived secluded, and in great poverty, in a small lodging ;-but she was contented, for him she loved was by her side;but ere long her child grew sickly, her husband longed to consult a celebrated English physician about it; their resources were fast failing; and he proposed, as he had wealthy friends in England, that he should go there, reveal his concealed marriage, produce his lovely child, and induce them to make a provision for his wife, whom he meant to reseek and fetch away!"

"Poor Jessica Vernon!—first came the parting from her child and her husband, then long expectation, then 'that poor impotence called hope,' and then despair!—She never saw her William or her child again, but ere long an English paper reached her, announcing the death of her husband and little girl by a prevailing fever.

"From her sick bed, she wrote to a person through whom it was agreed they were to correspond, and received a full confirmation of the dreadful story. She lingered on for two years, for hearts break but slowly: those years she passed in this convent, living the life of a saint on earth, to win heaven's pardon for the sin of having loved the creature better than the Creator. It is now twenty years since that martyr spirit passed away. Her fate gave me a distaste for marriage. I took the veil; and my greatest source of sorrow has ever been the memory of her sufferings."

Sister Marie wiped her eyes. "Hark!" she cried, "that is the refection bell-I must

hasten away: farewell, my dear child! As it is nearly five, I suppose you will go home at once."

Sister Marie did not look at poor Jessica, else she would have seen a mysterious horror on her pale face, and a deep grief in her tearful eyes. "Great God!" she murmured, "that martyr must have been my mother !- The cruel deceiver! Ch, can he be my father? What, then, she died but twenty years ago; and Marcus is two and twenty! Oh, can it be? Could fortune tempt him to so vile a crime? Not merely the forsaking one who loved him so devotedly, but a crime punishable by the laws of his country-that of marrying another while she yet lived! Oh, dreadful! it cannot be! and yet all confirms it. My name, my resemblance, so startingly strong,—the mystery in which my birth has ever been shrouded,-Sir William's hatred of Lady Vernon,-his kindness to me! Oh, God! to what crimes dost thou not tempt poor sinful man! I see it all: his passion for my mother past, ruin stared

him in the face; an instinct still made his child dear to him. Lady Vernon's wealth tempted. and he yielded! If it be so, Lady Vernon is not, has never been, his wife !- her children are not legitimate! Alas! alas! my proud and noble Marcus, my good and gentle Lucy. what a death-blow were this discovery to you! I, then, I,-so trampled on, so despised, so insulted,-I am the heiress of Rockalpine! The coronet I was accused of plotting for, as Marcus's wife, would be one day mine in my own right; for I remember well, in default of male heirs, it descends to a female. Delamere, I was not, then, of a birth unworthy thine:-no, nor of a nature thou couldst despise; for, though I feel in my heart of hearts that sister Marie's tale is true, and though I believe I might force my father to own me.-me his only lawful child !- yet never will the poor protégée, the daughter of adversity, sacrifice others to herself,-never bring the punishment of guilt to a father's age, the blush of shame to a brother's noble brow, nor the tears upon a sister's

cheek. Flaunt on, proud and cold Lady Vernon! taunt, goad, and insult! I could one day, perhaps, claim the coronet you so prize, and I spurn it! I could be revenged,—and my heart is too noble for such revenge!

"Well has it been said, that 'truth is strange, stranger than fiction:' how like a romance is this sad story! To-morrow I will learn from sister Marie where my mother sleeps; and her child, sad inheritor of her sorrows, shall kneel and pray by her grave. And so I am honourably—nay, nobly—born! How proud a consciousness is this! I have so feared, so trembled, so blushed at the most remote allusion to my birth. There is no blot upon my name! Delamere need not be ashamed of having loved me."

Such were Jessica's thoughts, as she returned to her apartment: her heart was elate, her head giddy, with the tidings she had heard. A thousand instincts awoke in her bosom: she longed to see that father again,—not to avenge herself, but to comfort him! He was in trouble;

and—however much he had wronged, slighted, and disowned her—she was his daughter, and a daughter's place is ever by a sorrowing father's side. She felt she could not stay in her quiet retreat; and the thought awoke regret. In the midst of a busy, populous city, she had lived in the most perfect seclusion; none had ever sought to molest her. And in general we have remarked, that where a woman, however young and pretty, is seriously bent on escaping notice, she can succeed.

A very quiet style of dress, and a modest dignity of manner, the avoidance of all public places and crowded streets, and the habit of going out before idlers were abroad, and of coming in while they were at dinner, had secured even so pretty and unprotected a person as Jessica from any thing beyond a passing glance of admiration or a respectful bow.

A coquettish and conscious air, a flaunty manner, and a showy style of dress, are much more frequently than beauty the cause of impertinence and idle persecution. Jessica could not sleep; her heart was agitated, her brain bewildered, with all she had heard: all the memories of her childhood crowded back upon her; she thought of her mother's broken heart, her own blighted youth and disappointed love, and her brow burnt with indignation. She pondered then on her father, (never happy,) perhaps the victim of a secret remorse—on his many troubles—his ruined fortunes—his failing strength; and resentment softened into pity—she wept.

Once or twice, too, when she had fallen asleep, she was roused by noisy neighbours in the adjoining room, who seemed to divide the hours of slumber between carousing and squabbling; for the oath of a man, the scolding of a woman, and the occasional shriek of a child in pain, called back poor Jessica from the land of dreams to a thousand painful realities.

Towards morning the poor girl felt sleepy, and when her wonted hour for rising came, she found she had a headache and a slight fever; and she remembered, with pleasure, that, as it was a grand fête day, she had the privilege of absenting heself from the convent if she chose.

When the handsome Bourdeaux damsel who waited on her, and who had ever paid her every kind attention, came in, radiant with smiles, and equipped for the fête, which was held a few miles from Bourdeaux, she started to see the usually early Jessica in bed.

"In bed on the morning of such a grande fête!" Lisette could not understand it.

When Jessica told her she was not even going to the fête, and added, "There could be no fête where one had no friends," a tear rose to Lisette's bright black eye. She hesitated, then said, "The people in the next room, a dame et un monsieur, aussi des Anglais, were going to this fête with her and her mother, (the mistress of the inn,) and if mademoiselle would condescend to join the party, as there were other English——"

Jessica thanked her warmly, but declined, on the plea of having had a very bad night, partly through the noise made by those very English. "Who are they?" she asked Lisette.

"I don't know their names," replied the girl, "and I don't like their faces. They came by an English vessel yesterday, and they set sail for America to-morrow. They are strange, rude sort of people; but they seem to have plenty of money: still, I don't like them, because they are so cruel to a little girl they have with them-such a lovely child !- just like the pictures of the angels in the church, as fair as mademoiselle, and with long bright gold hair; but if she speaks they scold her, or switch her with a little cane; and the poor thing is so pale and trembling! And now they're going to this fête; and, would you believe it, ma'mselle? instead of taking the poor child, they're going to lock her in, all alone, and, I believe, to tie her to her chair!"

"Wretches!" said Jessica, with a sister's feeling for the oppressed. "Is it their own child?" "I think not, ma'mselle: for they are very coarse, dark-looking people, and this child is like a young saint, so fair and gentle, and with such beautiful blue eyes! That curtain, miss, hides a door into that room, miss: if, when they are gone, you would like to open it, and just take a peep in at the little girl, she would never see you, for there's another curtain on the other side; but you could look through it, ma'mselle, and see the very picture of an angel on earth."

"Oh! no," said Jessica; "poor little victim, I have no wish to feel more interested in her than I do already; and, perhaps, as the oppressed are often fearful, I might frighten her to death."

"As you please, ma'mselle. Everybody is going to the fête except the waiter and old Suzette; they'll attend, if you want anything."

"Can I have 'Galignani's Messenger?"

"Oh yes, mademoiselle: you can keep it all all day, if you please; I'll send Suzette up with it—I hear my mother calling!—we are now just going to set off—there! I hear those English people locking in the little girl, and I can hear her cry, pauvre petite! Adieu! ma'mselle—we shall not be back till evening."

Jessica rose and dressed herself: her thoughts wandered to the poor little victim, so near her; and several times she longed to look in upon her; but old Suzette came up with two of Galignani's papers in her hand. Jessica seized on them. As she read, the blood forsook her lips—her hands were clenched—her eyes distended with horror, and large drops stood upon her pallid brow. She had not seen the paper for some weeks; and thus the first tidings of Delamere's arrest, his imprisonment, his supposed crime, and fast approaching trial, reached the aghast and miserable girl!

Upheld by the vivid horror of her feelings, she read to the end of the awful paragraph; saw, too, by an allusion to the marriage with Lord Stare of her for whose sake he was supposed to have committed this awful crime, that Aurelia had forsaken him; and then the paper fell from her hand, and she sunk quite senseless on the floor.

When she recovered, it was noon. She started up: " I cannot stay here," she murmured, while they are killing his body and blackening his name! I will go to him. Innocent! the angels in heaven are not more innocent than thee, thou adored, idolised Osmond! Oh! I will go to thee! thou wilt tell me all; and woman's devoted heart, and her perception, quickened by a love which is now no crime, will find the clue of this labyrinth of guilt. I shall unmask the fiends that have plotted thy ruin! Something in my heart tells me I shall prove thy innocence. Thank Heaven, a vessel starts this very evening: be calm, my heart. My passport! yes; I must get that signed. I must write to the convent-oh! I have much to do; I must not go mad-the trial! let me see, when, when is it? Ah! in four days from this! but four days are as four years to God! Oh, Delamere! how do I love thee!"

As she put down the paper, in another para-

graph the name of Sir William Vernon caught her eye. She read, "We grieve to learn that the honourable Baronet is seriously indisposed at his mansion, in Berkeley square. The shock occasioned him by the accounts of the death of his son Marcus Vernon, Esq. of the —— regiment, who was drowned, with the rest of the passengers, in the Spitfire, bound to ———, is said to be the cause of Sir William's illness."

A passionate gust of tears relieved poor Jessica's bursting heart. "Why, oh! why," she sobbed, "did I ever come here—here, away from all I love! But now filial duty, as well as passionate love, recals me. Oh, Marcus! dear, kind, blessed Marcus—gone! Oh, that I could die! But no—I may yet be useful here! My poor father! Osmond! beloved Osmond! I must live for you both. Dear Marcus, if that thy brave and noble spirit have found mercy, as I feel it has, at the Throne of Grace, plead for me there, beloved brother, and let success attend my efforts!"

Jessica then hastened to the consul's to get

her passport signed. On her return, she wrote to the abbess, explaining that the illness and danger of some very dear friends called her suddenly back to England. Her salary, which was paid her by the month, she had fortunately received a few days before, and the previous night she had settled her bill at the inn. She also wrote a few lines of affectionate farewell to sister Marie, and left a pretty ring as a keepsake for her kind attendant Lisette, with a note. which she knew would be valued as much as the gift. This done, she hastily packed up her things; the vessel was to sail at five; and when Jessica had completed her arrangements, and caused her luggage to be conveyed on board, it wanted half an hour of that time. The agony and excitement of her mind had till then kept up her strength. She had taken nothing since breakfast, and she was trying to eat a biscuit, and to swallow some wine-and-water, that bodily weakness might not come in the way of her mental resolution, when she distinctly heard a child's shriek, and the word " Fire! fire!" rang through her ears

The cry came from the room where the little English girl was confined. Jessica rent aside the curtain, unlocked the door, and stood in the middle of the room. The little prisoner, in order to amuse herself, had dragged the chair, to which she was tied, to a table, on which stood a box of lucifer-matches. Having lighted some of these, she was waving them about, to make what children call "a red riband," when a spark fell on a newspaper near, and set it in a blaze.

Having extinguished the fire with a jug of water, luckily at hand, Jessica called to the child, who, with its chair, had fallen on the floor, and was hiding its face in terror and shame.

At the sound of her voice the child looked up, exclaimed, "Jessica! dear, dear Jessica!" and burst into tears.

And Jessica, in spite of the disguise of an English peasant-girl, in which it was shrouded, instantly recognised the little Egbert Earl of Mandeville!

Oh, wild delight! Oh, most ecstatic moment! he lives! he is safe! Delamere is not only innocent, but the world will see his innocence written in characters of light; and she, the thrice-blessed woman, she is the instrument God has chosen to prove him innocent! For a few moments the faintness of extreme joy, that joy, which, ere now, has killed, by overflowing the human heart, transfixed her; but the thought of all she had yet to do, recalled her to the energy of action. She unloosed the vile bands which bound the poor child to his chair, and, in doing so, she marked how wan and pallid were his cheeks—how wasted his little hands.

"Oh! but, Jessica, they will come!" he said, clinging to her; "they will beat—they will kill me!"

"Dry your tears, my darling, they shall never touch you more! Come with mecome with Jessica," she added, kneeling beside him, and wiping his tears: "I am going to England—you will see mamma and Osmond,
—will you come?"

"Oh, yes, yes! but they will come back!" and again he wept.

Jessica caught up some papers, among which were letters, in a hand she fancied she recognised: "These," she said to herself, "may be necessary to prove his innocence, and the guilt of others." She then wrapped Egbert in a shawl -tied on his head a little bonnet she saw on the bed-almost carried the paralysed and sinking child down stairs-got him on boardlaid him in a berth, and tried to lull him to rest. Just as he fell asleep, the vessel set sail, and Jessica hastened on deck to take a last view of the quai. Long did she distinguish the little inn, to which she almost fancied a peculiar Providence had guided her. Ere she quite lost sight of it, she perceived a party (she doubted not those who had been at the fête) enter it; and, through a glass, a stranger had proffered her, she fancied she saw a woman rush wildly out—perhaps the wretched culprit, in search of Egbert. Oh! how her
heart throbbed with gratitude to Heaven!
What rapturous tears poured down her pale
cheeks! How fondly did she watch over her
sleeping treasure! How, when he woke, did
she lull and soothe him! And when, at the
thought of Marcus and his watery grave, her
tears fell fast, a something seemed to whisper
to her heart that he was happy; and she
fancied, that from his home above he had heard
and granted her prayer!

The next morning, when Jessica had persuaded Egbert to take some refreshment, and by her tenderness and care had won him back to a feeling of confidence, she led him on deck, and seating herself apart with him, she learnt from him all he could tell of the story of his abduction.

It seemed, that, after Delamere left him with the woman at the lodge, she persuaded him to go in, and she talked to him about her poor boy who had been buried that day, and she gave him a piece of cake, and a glass of sweet wine. While they were talking, another woman came in, and said that the countess wanted to play Captain Delamere a trick; that she was gone to town, and Osmond was to join her there, and she had sent a girl's dress for his young lordship, which he was immediately to put on, and go up to town with the woman who brought it. "I did not much like to be dressed as a girl," said the little boy; "but as mamma wished it-mamma, who so seldom has any fun-I put it on: the women laughed, and praised me; and we set off-I and the strange woman. It was almost dark; but we went on foot to the railway carriage, where a man, her husband, joined us. When we got to town, instead of taking me to mamma, they went in a hackney coach to a dirty house in a little street near the river. When I asked for mamma, the dreadful man flew in a violent rage. He said I was no longer Egbert Earl of Mandeville, the son of a countess: -I was to call myself

little Sarah Stubbs, their niece; that I was never to wear boy's clothes again, nor to let any one know that I was a boy. I cried, and said, I would tell every one; and that I would go to mamma. The wicked man then got a stick and beat me; and when I still cried out that I was a boy, and an earl, and my mamma the Countess of Mandeville, the women pinched and shook me, and got a handkerchief to tie round my mouth, that no one might hear me. Every time I spoke, they struck me; and all day I had nothing to eat; but still I cried, and tore the nasty frock off, and cried out who I was. At last, they got a knife to kill me: but they said, that if I was quiet, in time I should have boy's clothes again, and go back to mamma; and if I made any more noise, they would cut me to pieces. So then I tried to be quiet: I did not like to be killed, Jessy; and they gave me something to eat. We staid a long time in this dirty house and nasty street; and then we went first in a little ship, to a town by the river side, and lived there; and

then in a large ship, where no one spoke English—and I was very, very sick; but, at last, we got to that large town, and the house where you found me, Jessy; and there they began to beat me again, because I cried for mamma and Osmond, and for my own clothes. Oh, they were so wicked, Jessy! Will they ever come back?" and he clung to her: "Will you let them take me, if they do?"

"Never! never!" said Jessica, clasping him to her bosom: "your Father in Heaven is sending you now to your mother on earth! and I will not leave you, till I have given you safely back to your mamma and Osmond, and all you love!"

"And given me my own clothes, Jessy? I have a green velvet coat, and a scarlet cloth, and a plaid—oh, so many—instead of this ugly, dirty gown."

"Yes, directly we land, my darling, I will get you some boy's clothes again."

"Oh, I am so happy, Jessica," said the poor child, raising his pale face, covered with tears. "I shall see mamma, and nurse and Osmond, and be a boy again. I prayed to God, as nurse taught me to do, when I was in trouble. Do you think he heard me all that way off, up in the blue sky?"

"Yes, my darling boy, he can hear every whispered prayer on earth. Never forget to pray to him, my child, and he will never forsake you."

"I will pray now, Jessy, shall I? and thank him for having heard me," said the child, and sinking on his knees, he clasped his little hands, and buried his face in Jessica's lap.

## CHAPTER XV.

It was the morning of Delamere's trial: the sun rose with an unclouded splendour, and seemed to sail through the blue heavens with a dazzling pomp, which promised a brilliant day to the thousands and tens of thousands on the tiptoe of expectation—rushing to the awful scene. All England was awake with the dawn—coaches, trains, omnibuses overflowed—the vendors of "correct likenesses," which were the beau ideal of Thurtell in moustachios, of "imaginary confessions," of "exact fac-similes of the spot where the murder was committed," and views of the "monster cutting off the little angel's head,"

of lives copied from the most dreadful parts of the "Newgate Calendar:" with the voices of these itinerant biographers the very air was heavy, and their pockets were heavy with the money of an easily-gulled public!

The sun streamed through the grated window of Delamere's cell full on his pale and noble face,—and yet he slept. All England was awake, and the object of all this excitement slept! At length, with a deep sigh, he awoke, and met the kind, glistening green eye of Burridge. Burridge, admitted by the jailer, had been watching him for an hour: he could not bear that Delamere should wake, on such a morning, to find himself alone!

"Ah, my dear friend, Burridge!" he cried, extending his hand, "is it indeed you?"

"Why, who else should it be? Do ye think any of your fine 'summer-friends' can stand one blast of evil fortune?—no, no! they're all blown over — but if the sun shines, they'll come back! They profess now to believe you guilty, that they may be spared the

trouble of shewing any sympathy; but I have penetration enough to see you're innocent, and generosity enough to stand by you to the last.

—But cheer up! you look pale and sad. Hold yourself up, and step out like this! Every eye will be on you! Ah, how I've neglected all my accomplishments lately—look at me! I wish you had a little of my colour and flesh! I'm in wonderful health, now. I wish Bab could see me—just look at that arm and that leg. By the by, how did you sleep?—I slept like a top!"

"I have slept heavily this morning; but, in truth, my night was a strangely disturbed one."

"No wonder," said Burridge, "when a man doesn't know whether he'll be condemned to be hanged the next day, that his night should be disturbed!"

"No, I suppose, as you say, it's no wonder, Burridge; but yet I did not expect it. I went to bed full of hope and confidence; and even now, it seems to me that I could take

my oath I left the door of this inner cell open. and a lamp burning in the outer one. Well, I awoke suddenly-at least, so it seems to mefrom a dream that I was acquitted, and I fancied I distinctly heard a voice say, 'Osmond Delamere, do you sleep? You have strong nerves to sleep thus soundly on the eve of a trial which will prove you guilty, and doom your body to a vile death and your name to eternal infamy!' Who speaks there? I cried. 'One to whom your shame is glory-your downfall triumph! Do you remember a kneeling, weeping, rejected woman? Do you remember your cold scorn, and her vow of vengeance? Did she not bid thee date thy downfall from that moment? Did she not tell thee that her soul clung to the iron anchor of the rejected? and that when earth's vilest portion was thine, she would seek thee, and whisper to thee the name of that anchor-henceforth the watchword of her soul - revenge?' I had listened, spell-bound, to these words, for they had once been spoken to me by a

woman. Suddenly, I sprung out of bed—my cell was wrapped in darkness; the door I had left open was closed—secured on the outside. I persuaded myself it was a dream, a vision, and I returned to my couch; but even now it seems too vivid—too real: I cannot shake off the impression that I was awake, and that I heard a voice."

"Nothing but a dream—a sort of nightmare, that's all; I often have it if I eat a good
supper: for instance, I dream I'm married to
Bab: once I awoke with a glass in my hand,
which I'd seized as though at the weddingbreakfast—it was full of camomile and horehound tea, a stomachic I take the first thing in
the morning—the bitter taste awoke me, and
I was sorry enough to find it was a dream.
Another time, I fancied we were set off on the
bridal tour; and I awoke, sitting bolt upright
in my bed, which I had mistaken for the
chaise, and my bolster for Bab! I tell you
this to shew you how much a dream may
seem like reality. Oh, yes, of course, it must

have been a dream!" Here the jailer coming in, on being questioned, owned that he had " thought it his duty to enter when the captain was asleep, to extinguish his lamp, and fasten the inner door." That seemed to decide the point, and Burridge left Delamere to make his toilet for the expectant multitude. For the sake of Macbotcher's character for tailorship and punctuality, we must say the "braw black suit" was come, and admirably made. Delamere, to oblige Burridge, put it on; with it there was a parcel closely packed, and repeatedly sealed, on which Macbotcher had written, " The inclosed is na' to be opened, except in case o' Captain Delamere's sudden death. The twa suits thegither cost twelve pund ten." By this arrangement, he hoped to remind Delamere that he had made it, and must be paid for it, and to spare his feelings by calling the shroud a suit, and hanging a " sudden death !"

## CHAPTER XVI.

The inside of the court presented one dense mass of spectators, many of whom were of the exclusive and fashionable set to which Delamere had once belonged; torrents of human beings filled all the avenues from the prison to the court-house; every window was alive with eager faces, and the roofs of the very houses were thronged with men.

So strong was the feeling against the "remorseless villain," who had been described to the last as placid, and even cheerful, in his demeanour, that it was found necessary to double the police force, and to convey the accused by a private and circuitous route to the court-house. Thus disappointed of a sight of Delamere, the multitude, enraged at what seemed to them a favour shewn to "gentry," became more savagely eager for his death; and many an unwashed face grew gloomy, and many a harsh voice growled forth an oath, and a resolution, "that if the murderer was acquitted because he was a 'nob,' when he had butchered a child, while a poor man had often been hanged for stealing a sheep, they would take the law into their own hands, and have blood for blood!"

Among those who had contrived, by rising at an unwonted hour, and by acting with an unwonted energy, to secure good places, we recognised Dempster, Ogle, Simper, and several more of the same set, who had large bets depending on the verdict, and who, showily dressed, were whiling away the time which elapsed before the trial began with sandwiches out of silver cases, draughts out of pocket-pistols, laughter, oaths, and bets! Macbotcher and Tim had secured places very near these

heartless idlers, and often did Macbotcher inwardly congratulate himself on the capital fit "o' the braw black suit," and excite the idlers' mirth, by calling upon them, in his broad Scotch, to behave "like dacent men, with some feeling for a fellow-mon." The witnesses for the Crown were, the woman at the lodge; the man who had found the body; the servants who had seen Delamere depart from Vernon Hall; and, sore against their will, two of Delamere's household, who deposed to his returning alone in the chaise.

On Delamere's side, to the surprise of every one, appeared the Countess of Mandeville herself! pale and spectral from her recent illness, clothed in the deepest mourning, and looking like the shadow of her former self. She, the first accuser, in long and lonely communings with her spirit and her God, had felt a firm conviction steal into her heart that Delamere was not the murderer of her child; and she was there, upheld by this conviction, to undo the wrong she fancied that she had done him;

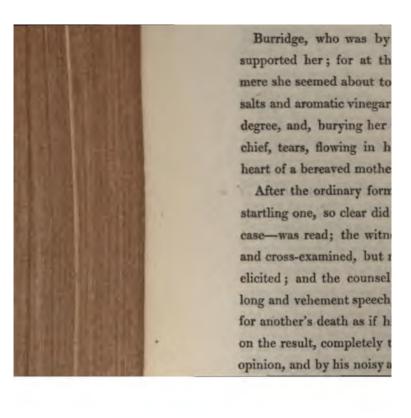
to testify to his almost paternal affection for her lost treasure; to prove the thousand opportunities he had had of destroying him without awakening one suspicion;—of revealing how his care had saved her darling's life, when, more than once, he would have perished, but for Osmond Delamere.

Lady Vernon, too, also in mourning for her son, had been subpænaed to prove that her daughter was solemnly engaged to Delamere at the time of the murder, and that the marriage was to have taken place in a week from that fatal evening. This witness was called by Delamere's counsel to refute a prevailing and popular impression that Miss Vernon and Delamere had parted on no friendly terms, and that she had taunted him with the superior rank of his rival, Lord Stare. Mrs. Winter, too, ghastly pale, even through her rouge, dressed in the height of the fashion, and with a wild excitement of manner, chose to appear leaning on Marvel Brown's arm, both having contrived to be called as witnesses to Osmond Delamere's constant affection for Egbert, and general character for mildness and honour; as if in such a case such milk-and-water evidence could avail; but they wished to figure in the witness-box, and thus they achieved it.

An intense and hushed interest, an electric excitement, and a breathless awe, passed through every heart (however frivolous or callous), when the prisoner took his place at the bar. The sun, which had just been hidden by a passing cloud, literally poured a stream of light upon his radiant hair; his grand and thoughtful brow, the pale beauty of his face, the majesty of his manner, actually startled the beholders.

There is an instinct of the heart with regard to some faces, a spontaneous faith no evidence can shake; and all who looked upon him as he entered, felt for a moment a doubt of his guilt.

As he slowly recognised among his own witnesses the altered face and form of Lady de Mandeville, he started, a faint flush crossed his cheek, and the tears rose to his eyes; there



crime, a well ripened plot, although there is much weight in my learned brother's opinion, that the apparent carelessness and risk may have been the work of design; a sort of double, nay, of treble cunning. It is true that no one would at first suspect a man in his senses of committing such a crime without one attempt at concealing it; but it is possible, too, that he may have looked to that circumstance as a future safeguard; but I rather incline to the belief that 'the means to do ill deeds make ill deeds done.' The mad jealousy, the frail impediment between the defendant and the power of placing on the brow he idolised a coronet brighter than that-" (Here the counsel for the defendant called his learned brother to order, and reminded him that he was in the region of reality, not of romance.) "'Truth is strange, stranger than fiction," replied the counsel for the prosecution, wiping his brow, and smiling, as if the stake thus played for and punned upon were not a human life: "we need not turn to romance for cases in which ambition and envy have prompted the slaughter of innocence for the advancement of guilt. The spirit of Cain still wanders upon the earth; wherever the guilty hand is raised to shed the innocent blood, that spirit has crept into the heart; sometimes it has grown with the criminal's growth, and strengthened with his strength; - sometimes it rushes in like an armed man, sudden and unexpected, taking the feeble tenement (where no strong virtues dwell) by storm. The unprejudiced and enlightened jury, by whose verdict the prisoner at the bar will stand or fall, to whom the history of the past is as a store-house of which their knowledge and wisdom is the key; they will be at no loss to recal cases of murder as rash, as dreadful, if not as revolting in all its aspects, as that of the deceased. Look upon the past: among its pale phantoms are those of children, babes, slaughtered for man's ambition or revenge; the Sacred Volume abounds with cases in point, and more recent history overflows with such records. Arthur of Brittany rises on our memory, lovely, good, and almost as youthful as the murdered Egbert, Earl of Mandeville. The victims of Richard rush upon our thoughts; and humbler instances throng to the recollection of every lawyer, nay, every student of the law. I shall presently call witnesses to prove that Mr. Delamere had been for some time gloomy and dispirited. I do not think, with my learned brother, that he was meditating this crime, but that the envy, the ambition, and the mad jealousy which prompted it, were busy at his heart. Of the crime itself it is needless to speak. Never was a case so clear. Circumstantial evidence is here strong as the eyewitness of men. The deceased left Vernon Hall alone with Mr. Delamere-Mr. Delamere -remember, gentlemen of the jury-after the deceased, the next and last heir to the title and estates of Mandeville !- the only person who could in any way profit by the death of the child. He leaves Vernon Hall with this child: the mother-the devoted mother-watches in vain for her child through the dreadful night.

I will not harrow up your feelings by describing the agony of the watch of that mother; my own" (and he took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes) "are not equal to the task: the woman at the lodge, one Judith Tweedle, an honest woman, who could have no interest in disguising the truth; a woman devoted to her young lord, whose childish, though angelic virtues, seem, while endearing him to all on earth, to have fitted him to meet his early death; this woman deposes to having vainly expected his return: witness stateth, that Mr. Delamere and her young lord passed through the castle gates in the morning, and after that, in the poor woman's simple language, she 'never saw the little angel's blessed face again !' Tempted by the evil spirit to destroy that child, what would the guilty do? To fly would be to confirm suspicion, and to lose the fruit of crime: but mark how the deed so curiously hidden was revealed :- forgotten, in the prisoner's pocket lurked the blood-stained knife,-the blood-stained handkerchief of the deceased!

These glared upon the mother's eyes like the robe of many colours on those of the patriarch of yore: but he had other sons, and the Countess of Mandeville had but one-her orphan boy, her hope, her all! Thus, betrayed by the trifling oversight that often unwinds the most complicated crime, all was discovered ;-the marks of a struggle near the water, the drops of blood on the dock leaves, the clothes, and, finally, the headless body of the victim-all are 'confirmation strong as proofs of holy writ;'the hurried and puerile invention of the prisoner to account for the possession of the blood-stained knife and handkerchief, and of the footsteps, which he perhaps feared might be discovered, adds a sort of evidence instead of creating a doubt. No, as I said before, 'the means to do ill deeds make ill deeds done'-the solitude, the hour, the knife, the delicate, the trusting, the unresisting child, the boundless confidence of the mother, the very stream that flowed, as though to wash away the body and the traces of the blood, all united with those fiends of hellmedition, ever, and wild passion,-and "the their first dames eternally" was done! I have control wood, gentlemen of the pure to a place statement. No language could add to the harnes of such mitths as these; so far from wishing to harnes up your sonis. I have been colliged in order to quiet my own feelings, to mes regular over some important details. I know not I there will be my attempt on the part of the defendant or his counsel to set up a piece of temporary insurity: in case of an unitrounité verilet, such a step, it has been said, will be taken."- Hime the prisoner was sen to start and half the from the chair, with which, on account of report illness, he had been acromosisted, as though to deny any such intention, but, recollecting himself, he sunk back again.) "I know not. I say, whether there is my such intention; but this I do say, that if such a pice is admitted here, then would it equally apply to all cases of murder; then may capital punishment bedime now for ever; then have all who have ever paid the penalty

of blood for blood been sacrificed, butchered; then is there no crime, no punishment, no safeguard, no law! I will now call the witnesses for the prosecution." Almost fainting with his vehemence, the counsel paused for a few moments to wipe his face and take breath, and then turned to examine the witnesses.

The witnesses for the prosecution did not long delay the proceedings of the court. No cross-questioning, from Delamere or his counsel, could shake the woman in her plain statement, that Delamere had not confided the little Egbert to her care, as he had been in the habit of doing when he returned late from Vernon Hall; but when first Delamere addressed her, she grew pale and trembled. Her husband, the man who had discovered the body, was next examined, and the thrilling horror against Delamere, with which his testimony was listened to, and the handkerchief and knife belonging to Egbert, and stained with blood, inspected by the jury, did away with the somewhat unfavourable impression Mrs. Tweedle's hypocritical, yet trembling manner, had made upon them and the public. Delamere's servants deposed to their master's having returned without the child, and having immediately set off for London; a close cross-examination elicited the fact that they had remarked several drops of blood on the chaise, and that Delamere had ordered them to wash them off before taking it back to Mrs. Winter.

Here closed the counsel for the prosecution. The judge then turned to Delamere, and in the ordinary form, but with a more than common agitation of manner, said, "What say you, prisoner at the bar, guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," replied Delamere, in a firm voice—" not guilty, my lord, as the God of truth and justice knows."

The voice and solemn manner of the prisoner filled every heart with awe — even Dempster felt his coward frame tremble as he saw, in so humbling a situation, yet with so proud a front, the man he had so flattered, so followed, so fawned upon, and so forsaken! And pri-

soner as Delamere was, Dempster felt his own comparative meanness, and he dreaded lest the eagle eye of the accused should fall on his apostate imitator.

After some conversation with his counsel, Delamere rose: he held in his hand the notes of his defence; his calm and graceful air, his tall form, and pale proud features, his dignity of mien, and his emphatic delivery, formed a strong contrast to the bustling, eager vehemence of manner, the rapid gesticulation, the punchy figure, and red bon vivant face of the counsel for the prosecution. He spoke; and as he did so, he broke a silence so entire, that the buzzing of a fly could have been distinctly heard!

"My lord,—I address you myself, instead of profiting by the well-known eloquence of my distinguished counsel, because I consider that though eloquence may persuade, conscious truth only can convince—the conviction of the innocence of the accused, and of the uprightness of his cause, gives weight to the most

unnatured tongue; and so cunningly has fate, or the malice of some hidden enemy, piled up and strengthened the mass of evidence against me: so much has falsehood been made to look like truth; so clear seems the guilt, so impossible the justification, that I believe there is but one man in this vast concourse thoroughly ponvisced of my innocence, and that man is myself! Therefore, though no orator, vet strong with the strength of truth, I plead my own cause-for, as I said before, I wish not to persuade, but to convince. The counsel for the prosecution has complimented the jury on their enlightened and unprejudiced minds. But this I must say, that after the monstrous statements, the garbled accounts, and the base calumnies, concerning me, which have been daily poured from the press, since the first hour of my commitment, no man who has read those papers (and who among you has not?) can put his hand on his heart, and say he is unprejudiced against me! Of all popular abuses, none require correction more than this. We shudder at the

accounts of savage nations, who devour their prisoners—they are merciful, compared to those who, while the captive lingers in his lonely prison, awaiting his sentence, feed a vulgar public, greedy of horrors, with the life of life, the honour, the fame, which to the just and noble-minded man are the breath of his nostrils-the soul of his existence! They poison ere they deal them out-the vile morsels with which they pander to a depraved taste, and the public (and judges and juries form a part of the public) eagerly swallow the poison; and with a poisoned mind, where can we seek an unprejudiced judge? I accuse all, from the highest, best-conducted journal, down to the lowest hawker of lies-all are guilty when the innocent are condemned! And, should that be my fate, it will be some consolation to me, to think that, when the truth dawns, that fate may tend to correct this vile abuse. Even now, I can hear the distant voices of men, hawking about the lies that poison and prejudice the public mind. I speak boldly, for the first step towards the

triumph of truth, is the conquest of prejudice; and I trust the jury will, to the utmost, endeavour to banish from their minds all they have heard against me, and endeavour to look upon this as a case heard for the first time. Again; if, as the counsel for the crown so cunningly asserted, the minds of the jury are rich with all the records of the past-if they recal the cases of children murdered for the ambition of men. they can recal those of men falsely accusedfalsely condemned-of circumstantial evidence, as convincing, proved false, when too late: and among the pale phantoms of the past, to which he so poetically alludes, the most touching are those of the falsely condemned-the most appalling those of the restless spirits of jurymen and judges, who having sentenced the innocent on the treacherous faith of circumstantial evidence, condemned by their own hearts, have never known rest again!

"My own case makes me hope that, whether I stand or fall, when the truth is made clear, as sooner or later it will be, the most defective part of our code (that which regards circumstantial evidence) will be amended. I can call no earthly witness to prove that I did not do the base, inhuman, and diabolical deed imputed to me. I can only call God to witness to the truth, and I can only hope that His voice will whisper to your hearts—first, a doubt of my guilt, and then a conviction of my innocence!

"Yes, I can call one more witness—the PAST! My past life shall witness for me—my devotion to that dear, dear child! Under Heaven I have twice been the humble instrument of saving his life. I have watched him alone, through long nights, when, without one guilty deed, the slightest relaxation in my bed-side watch, the delay of half an hour in the administering of a medicine, a moment of sleep or forgetfulness, such as even a mother, wearied with long watching, might have been betrayed into, would have made me Earl of Mandeville! I have taken him in my arms to bathe him on lonely coasts, where no eye could see us; and

where, had the spirit of Cain been indeed able to enter a heart, where, I am proud to say, religion and honour have ever dwelt, his death would have been easily imputed to accident, and no stain would have blackened my name! Thousands of times I could have destroyed, unseen and unsuspected. All plea of insanity I scorn and repudiate—I am, I ever have been, entirely sane. I can recal distinctly every circumstance of that fatal evening: all that has befallen me since, though it has shattered my health, has not shaken my mind. I left Vernon Hall on good terms with all its inmates, as I shall presently call witnesses to prove. I never dreamt for one moment, that the woman whose supposed love for me had induced me to propose to her, to offer her a heart, which I believe she well knew to be a disappointed and a bleeding one - I never dreamt for one moment of that (which subsequent circumstances have revealed)-that she was dazzled by the rank of another, and regretted her engagement with me.

"I would have scorned, from the depths of a proud heart, any woman who, having accepted me, thought any title nobler, or dearer, than that of my wife! The whole romantic fable of long unreturned devotion on my part -of unwilling acceptance on hers-of mad jealousy-all this is false as the father of lies himself-false as all the stories of my pecuniary embarrassment: the one, the lips of the lady's own mother shall disprove; the other, I call upon all with whom I ever had any dealings, my servants, my tradesmen, my tenants, to deny! What I here assert, those witnesses will presently prove. My plain statement, then, is this :- I left Vernon Hall alone, in a pony-chaise belonging to Mrs. Winter, with my young cousin-as we passed that part of the grounds where the river winds, overhung by a row of willows, he asked me to stop while he cut a stick to make a whistle-I did so: presently he called out to me that he had cut his hand severely-I hastened to him, and found it bleeding; I bound it in my own

handkerchief, and at his request I put his, stained as it was, which he valued because his mother had embroidered and marked it, into my pocket-some drops of blood from his hand fell on the chaise. When we reached the castle gates, as I was in a hurry to get home, and as I saw the woman near the lodge, I merely stopped while he entered, and drove away: finding a letter from my lawyer, and being disinclined to sleep, I went up to town in my own carriage, having ordered my servants to clean the stains of blood from Mrs. Winter's pony-chaise. I slept at Mivart's, and early in the morning I saw my lawyerwitnesses can prove this. I returned to Delamere Grove at noon, and there, to my horror and surprise, I heard an indistinct account that Egbert Earl of Mandeville was missing. I was setting out for the castle when I met his miserable mother-in the course of an agitating interview, I unconsciously drew from my pocket the blood-stained handkerchief her child had confided to me-it of course awoke

her wildest suspicions-the faith, the services, the devotion of years, were forgotten-how could a mother remember them then ?- and I was committed. Every word I have spoken is true; I swear it, by the God of truth! Whether my beloved and lamented little cousin, instead of going into the lodge, played about, lost himself, and was murdered in wanton cruelty, or for some hope of ultimate gain from the discovery of his body-or, whether some plot, too deep for mortal eye to fathom, too intricate for mortal hand to unwind, is connected with this, I know not: but, as we have hideous records of murders, committed for the few paltry pounds the sale of the body would produce, so, perhaps, the prospect of an immense reward might tempt the cupidity of some remorseless villain. I own, had I an enemy, I should rather incline to the belief that this was done by some one who knew that my honour is dearer to me than my life; and, not content with the sacrifice of the latter, has aimed at the destruction of the former: but, as I have never done a wrong to any, I believe I have no such foe! 'Till the discovery of the body, I did not believe in the death of my cousin; I trusted cupidity had induced some one to steal him, in the hope of a reward for his restitution; but now-" here Delamere's voice faltered, and the tears filled his eyes-" now I have done: I cannot dwell upon the death of that most lovely and beloved child! the long anguish of his own mother, who yet believes (I am proud to see) in my innocence, has scarcely surpassed mine! If God has granted weight to my words, and you are convinced, it is well. If I am acquitted, once free, all my efforts will tend towards the discovery of the perpetrator of this most awful of crimes: but I trust in God, that, if you are not convinced, there will be no recommendation to mercy (earthly mercy !)-no commutation of punishment. I do not affect any unnatural indifference to a violent and shameful death: but I would rather die a martyr than live one! I would rather commend myself to the mercy of God, than be commended to that of any earthly sovereign. I cannot live with a blot upon the noble name I inherited, and hoped to transmit, spotless; even if I could live on, between lingering through a dishonoured life or dying a sudden death; which, whatever it may now seem to others, I should feel entitled me to the crown of martyrdom - (and, one day, by the light of truth, the whole world would so see it too)-between these two fates I do not hesitate. Acquit, and leave me free to act, and I doubt not the murderer will yet be brought to justice; condemn, and let me die, and from my ashes the Phœnix of Truth will yet spring. Justice may come late, but she will come at last; from the spot of my sacrifice Truth will raise her eternal voice, and the execution of one innocent man will, perhaps, prevent that of many, and be a lesson to all after time.

"And you, young and innocent victim!" he added, in a sudden burst of enthusiasm, forgetful of all around him, "you whom I fancy I behold smiling upon me from heaven, as you were wont to smile upon me on earth—you, through whose intercession, perhaps, it is that my heart is filled with peace in this hour of more than mortal trial—you, beloved child of my adoption! as kindred martyrs, we shall meet again! Forgive me, gentlemen of the jury, I have done; my counsel will call my witnesses; I leave my case with you. If you are enlightened from above, a verdict of acquittal is already in your hearts—but, if not, I do not blame you. You may be wise, but you are not omniscient; you are men, and, perhaps, before none but God do I stand acquitted here!"

Delamere here sate down; his defence had produced an unparalleled excitement. Burridge wept aloud—every woman was in tears, and many were carried out fainting. The countess, pale but resolute, struggled against a feeling much like death at her heart, in order to give her evidence—the jury looked gloomy and vindictive, like men called upon to sacrifice conscience to feeling, or feeling to con-

science—and the judge's hand trembled, and his cheek paled.

The witnesses were examined, the counsel for the Crown replied, and the prisoner's eloquent and touching defence melted like frostwork in the sun, as step by step the crown lawyer combated his statements, and exhibited the fallacies upon which he contended the whole defence was built. Every eye was now turned upon the Judge: he alone had still the power of arresting the re-action in the minds of the jury, which the reply of the counsel for the Crown had occasioned, and of bringing them once more under the influence of Delamere's beautiful defence; but the Judge was certainly not a convert to the prisoner's innocence: his summing up was lucid, able, and intended to be impartial, but the bias of his own mind was evident throughout: " If," said he, in conclusion to the jury, " you entertain the least doubt of the veracity of Mrs. Tweedle and her husband, who are the chief witnesses against the accused, since their testimony convicts him of falsehood, in his alleged delivery of the Earl into Mrs. Tweedle's care, you are bound to give the prisoner the benefit of that doubt, in a verdict of acquittal; but if you believe them to be, as they have hitherto been accounted, honest and credible witnesses, then is the prisoner's guilt sealed by their evidence; and the explanation which he gives of the blood in the carriage, on the knife, and on the handkerchief, rendered more than doubtful by the falsehood of which he would stand convicted; for I need not remind you, that ' falsas in uno,' is generally 'falsas in omni.' I now leave it to your God and your conscience to dictate your verdict." The jury then retired: three dreadful hours did they remain closeted, and then they returned a verdict of " guilty!"

Yes! they found Osmond Delamere guilty of the wilful murder of the infant Egbert, Earl of Mandeville.

Every heart but Delamere's grew faint—a slight shriek issued from many a female lip,

and a deep groan from many a manly heart but Delamere neither groaned nor shuddered.

There was no recommendation to mercy, and the judge proceeded to put on the cap, and was about to sentence the prisoner, when there was a slight bustle in court, and a scrap of paper was handed to Burridge, who, having read it, summoned hastily Delamere's counsel.

The counsel demanded a few minutes delay, as an important witness was said to have arrived on Delamere's side, one who, he added, might induce the jury to alter their verdict.

A slow cloud of crimson passed over the marble face of Delamere: a breathless excitement prevailed—in a few moments, Burridge appeared; by his side a pale, fair girl—and in his arms, raised high, that all the court might behold him, smiling with the smile of a seraph from heaven, and stretching his arms towards Delamere—the infant Egbert, Earl of Mandeville!

<sup>&</sup>quot; Here is an important witness, gentlemen

when here is even Burridge, in a stentorian water, still building the boy in his arms far above his head: "here is, my lord judge—here is Egders. Earl of Mandeville!—Long live the mobile how!—Delamere, you are saved, you are indeed acquired, and may God bless you!"

Of the confusion that ensued, no pen can convey an adequate idea. Delamere, who had heard the wedlet "guilty" without any outward emotion, rose, mised his arms to clasp the child to his heart, burst into a wild laugh, and field prostrate and insensible on the ground!—when he recovered, Egbert's arms were round his neck, and his tears on his cheeks. The counters knell beside him, pouring out broken but passionate prayers for pardon, wildly kissing his hands, and grovelling in the dust!

Although the court was cleared as soon as possible, hundreds extended their hands to clasp Delamere's, and congratulation was on every lip. The fair girl who had accompanied Egbert had been carried out fainting,—that girl the reader has recognised as Jessica Thorn-

ton. When Delamere recovered, he raised the countess, pressed her hand, wiped away her tears, and silently having clasped Egbert to his own heart—placed him on hers!

The papers Jessica had brought away with Egbert having been examined by Burridge and Delamere's counsel, the whole vile conspiracy was revealed. Mrs. Winter, whose long-hoarded and bitter revenge had concocted this fiendlike plot, was accused by her own handwriting, -the body was proved to be that of the dead child of Mrs. Tweedle, whose coffin was found to contain nothing but the head and arms and a few stones. Mrs. Winter, in spite of the violent hysterics into which she went, directly Egbert and Jessica appeared—was torn from Marvel Brown, and, with the Tweedles, taken into custody. There are no words for such rapture as the countess's, such prideful joy as Delamere's, and such deep thankfulness as Jessica's! but there is an echo in every human heart, more eloquent than words.

Burridge took every thing upon himself; he

led Delamere to the feet of the fainting girl, who had saved his honour and his life; he saw her revive to drop lifeless on his breast,-he folded in one embrace of his own strong giant arms-the Countess, Delamere, Egbert and Jessica, and thought he could have made room for Bab. Congratulated by judge and jury, and even by the counsel for the prosecution, Delamere and the whole party left the private room into which they had been dragged by Burridge. -The news of the result of the trial had got abroad, and the multitude were mad with joy and enthusiasm for Delamere. Long live Delamere! long live the gallant Captain! long live young Egbert and his noble mother! The air was full of these shouts; the populace insisted on dragging the carriage in which he left the court-house. In this carriage the countess, ever and anon clasping her recovered treasure to her heart, as though she feared to lose it again; the exulting Burridge, praising himself to the skies; the weeping Jessica; the joyous Egbert; and Delamere, whose cold hand clasped Jessica's, while his eyes slowly filled with tears as he gazed upon her:—these filled the carriage, which, dragged by the very mob which had so thirsted for his blood, followed by thousands of shouting and rejoicing human beings, stopped at length at the hotel where they were to pass the night, where his weeping yet overjoyed servants came forth to welcome him. There, at length, after liberal donations to the foremost of the populace, the rescued ones were allowed to shut out their sacred joy, their tearful rapture, from all the world: and Burridge to preside at a repast, which all beside were still too agitated to touch.

## CHAPTER XVII.

AFTER the delirious joy attendant on Egbert's restoration, the countess's rapture, and Delamere's vindication, Jessica thought of Marcus, and wept. She arrived in England only just in time to change Egbert's attire and to hasten to the scene of trial; the excitement of her mind had supplied the place of bodily strength; and in her terror lest she should arrive too late, all other feelings had been merged; but, after a few hours of troubled repose, she remembered Marcus and his unhappy father, and, weak as she was, no prayers could keep her from his side. Even Delamere's voice had no power to detain her, but when, in handing her into the

carriage early the next morning, he said, "Jessica, the life you have saved! will you consent to make it happy? You know how long and wildly I have loved you! say, dearest one, that I may hope!" Jessica pressed his hand—she could not speak,—but in that pressure the lover read consent.

She was received with the most chilling hauteur by Lady Vernon, who, directly after the trial, had left Abingdon, where it took place, for Vernon Hall, which was not far distant. It was so late when Jessica arrived at the hotel, that she was obliged to defer her departure till the next morning. Lady Vernon scarcely appeared to recognise her, but Jessica heeded her not. She made her way to Sir William's room; she was painfully struck by the alteration of his features, which was increased by the length of his beard, untouched as it had been since he had heard of Marcus's death. The room was darkened, and Jessica thought that despair lighted the deadly fire of his eyes-that gloomy, quiet despair, which is

to her, seemed for a moment excited by the account she gave of Delamere's rescue; then, burying his face in his hands, he ground, "But what is that to me? it cannot give me back my boy! How can you rejoice, Jessien, when he who loved you so, he———" He could not continue: Jessica threw herself on her knees, and wept.

"Oh! he is happier than we are, uncle!" she sobbed: "so good, so noble! we shall meet him in heaven!"

"Never!" exclaimed Sir William, flinging her from him, his eyes flashing: "no, never! Yet come to me, my child, you weep for him—ever my good, my gentle, my devoted child! Leave me now, I have much to do; and bless you, Jessica—a breaking heart blesses you! To-morrow at twelve come here, but not alone; bring Lady Vernon and Captain Delamere, and Mr. Burridge—I have news for them all."

"Oh! let me stay with you! I cannot leave you!" "No, go now; I have a right to be obeyed by you; here, let me kiss your pale cheek; you have been an angel to me, Jessica; one day you will be glad you have comforted one who has wronged you so."

He led her to the door, strained her to his heart, and then closed it on her.

Jessica, not anxious again to encounter her aunt, returned, as she had promised she would, in case Lady Vernon received her coldly, to the Countess of Mandeville, whose carriage still waited for her. The countess was in her dressing-room, with her darling boy, and as it was very late Jessica retired to the apartment prepared for her, without again encountering Burridge and Delamere.

The next morning Jessica, pale and agitated, invited Delamere and Burridge to attend her at the appointment her uncle had made for them. There was a solemn grief in her manner which impressed them forcibly, and Delamere dared not talk of his love to the tearful mourner; while Burridge, much against his

will, forbore to allude to his passion for Bab, and their approaching nuptials. A strange presentiment of evil hovered over Jessica, and when the carriage stopped at Sir William's house, had not Delamere supported her, she would have fainted: but this weakness was chased by feelings of active horror, when she saw the bewildered servants, their eyes red with tears—when she marked the half-closed shutters of the house, and caught, amid choking sobs, Mrs. Stanley's announcement that Sir William was no more.

"Where is my aunt, my poor, poor aunt?"
eried Jessica.

"In her own room, ma'am, in an hysterical fit," said Flounce: "she'd be glad to see you, miss; she's just come to."

Jessica followed Flounce, and found her aunt, somewhat softened by this new shock, surrounded by burnt feathers, salts, vinegar, sal-volatile, and hartshorn.

While Jessica tried to soothe a grief less deep than her own, and which she soon found to centre a good deal in the thought of the widow's cap, so peculiarly unbecoming to Lady Vernon's style of face; but which the mention of her lost son wrought up into a agony of despair, for he had been really dear to her, -- Delamere and Burridge, from the answers of Mrs. Stanley the housekeeper, and the other servants, conceived suspicions which they took care not to betray: they fancied, from the guarded replies of Mrs. Stanley, that she entertained similar ones, or, perhaps, that with her they were certainties. This terrible suspicion, which every thing tended to confirm, was, that Sir William Vernon had died by his own hand: they saw all the importance to his memory, and to his family, of concealing this suspicion; and, as he had been ill ever since he had heard of his son's death, his decease excited neither surprise nor enquiry.

But into Jessica's sad heart the awful doubt stole, when she remembered his solemn farewell; and a mysterious horror crept through

was called as if God had isself. The deal is all seriore loved so long-to when me we first head over the lived and lost, wh neive, we fink at length Birchiles him because He t and in parting left a smile ian, and bequestied it to hope and peace—we are t is hone now. To what like these? Ah! there is no such comfort for the mourner over the suicide! The suicide!—great God!—that helpless corpse had once a soul,—its last act was to defy Thee!—uncalled, nay, forbidden, to rush into Thy presence!

Faith has no comfort, religion has no hope, for thee, sad mourner over the grave of rash impiety. And Jessica, as in kneeling by the bed a small bottle fell from it, and rolled away out of her sight, felt convinced of the awful truth she had tried not to suspect, glanced fearfully at the cold face, on which she now fancied a smile of defiance to its Maker, and, uttering a piercing cry, fainted away.

She was found by Delamere and Burridge in a state of insensibility, and it was not before the expiration of a week that she was able to leave her room. She did so on the morning of the funeral, and after it had taken place Delamere and Burridge, who it seemed were Sir William's executors, were assembled, with herself and Lady Vernon, to hear his will read.

Lady Vernon, in her widow's cap, looked stern and forbidding; she could not disguise from herself, and those around her, that her much-prized remnant of beauty lay chiefly in the curls, ribbons, rouge, and blond, which now etiquette had compelled her to resign. Jessica looked so pale, so fragile, that Delamere, handing the will to Burridge, took his seat beside her, so that in case of her fainting he might be ready to assist her. Lady Vernon having remarked that she herself was the person most likely to be affected seriously (intensely egotistical and tetchily selfish even at such a moment), Burridge began:

"I, William Vernon, Bart. of Vernon Hall, Berkshire, and of Berkeley Square, London, being of sound mind, do by this last will and testament entirely annul all others. Having lost my own fortune, and that of the person commonly called Lady Vernon, in unfortunate speculations, I have nothing to bequeath but justice! And it is to see that administered, that I appoint Jacob Burridge, of Henrietta

Street, London, and Osmond Delamere, of Lower Grosvenor Street and of Delamere Grove, Berks, Esquires, my executors. To them I hereby declare, and call upon them to make the same publicly known, that Jessica (commonly called Jessica Thornton) is my only lawful child, and, consequently, at my decease, sole heiress of the earldom of Rockalpine, which, in default of male heirs, descends in the female line, and of all the entailed estates of the present possessor, who is in his ninetieth year. This terrible secret of my life I now reveal-because God, in his vengeance, has seen fit to deprive me of my son, to whom, honourable and chivalrous in feeling as I knew him to be, I believed its knowledge would have been worse than death; and for whose sake, had he lived, I would have kept it secret for ever. As he has been called away, and as both my younger daughters are married, as an atonement to my poor wronged injured child, Jessica Vernon, I bequeath the truth.

"I married at a very early age, and under the

influence of a romantic passion, Jessica de St. Julienne, lawful child of Captain de St. Julienne, a French cavalry officer, and an English lady. This marriage of mine was privately solemnised, according to the rites of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, at Bordeaux. Ere long, beggary stared me in the face. My little daughter seemed to be perishing for want of good advice; my wife was too ill to accompany me. Fondly attached to my child, but grown criminally and ungratefully indifferent to its mother, I hastened to England, and placed it with an English nurse; it recovered. At this time I found I had made an unintentional impression on Miss Dalton, a very wealthy heiress. My father died; I became Sir William Vernon. Feeling the uselessness of a title without a fortune, I caused the death of a William Vernon, Esq. and his infant child, Jessica, to be inserted in a newspaper, which I sent to my wife, at Bordeaux. She believed us dead, and mourned us as such!

<sup>&</sup>quot;Having wildly yielded to temptation, to

gaming, and every kind of extravagance, I found myself on the point of arrest. Miss Dalton made some pointed advances towards me, and I married her. Of course my first marriage alone was valid, for my wife did not die till three years after this second union.

" My daughter, Jessica, I brought up as my niece; and never could I have forced myself to do her justice had my beloved son lived! I do not attempt to justify my crime, of which the secret has never been divulged to any one, but I trust years of anguish, and this cruel blow, may expiate it. For the person commonly called Lady Vernon I feel deeply; her situation calls for sympathy, although her character may not awaken it. I implore her pardon, and that of my three daughters; and I call on Jessica, in particular, wronged and illtreated as she has always been by Lady Vernon, when she has it in her power, as Countess of Rockalpine, to take a noble revenge, and provide for her. I feel a strong presentiment that I shall die suddenly ere long; and I hope the and the series of the death of my son, we not be exemal in another world. The proofs of my first marriage, and of Jessica's birth, are in the hands of Mrs. Stanley, with whom I pinced her, and to whom I confided them, without informing her of their exact purport, two and twenty years ago. She can identify Jessica as the child then entrusted to her; she is to place the proofs in the hands of my executors.

aware has long existed between my daughter Jessica and Osmond Delamere, will induce them to hasten a marriage which will secure the happiness of both, and give my child the protection she needs. There is now no blot on his reputation, or on her name; and I trust and entreat, no pretended respect for my memory, disreputable as I feel it must be, will delay the marriage.

"Witness my sign and seal,
"WILLIAM VERNON."

This will was dated the very night on which Jessica had seen him last; and was witnessed by three servants of the household.

At the conclusion of the will Lady Vernon, or, rather, Miss Dalton, was carried out of the room in a fit of screaming hysterics. Burridge followed her, pitying her situation, to tell her, that, until Jessica was in circumstances to provide for her, his purse was at her service.

Jessica, too, rose to go to her aunt, but her strength, severely tried by late events, her recent illness, and present agitation, quite forsook her. She sank back in her chair, and Delamere flung himself at her feet: for the first time the lovers were alone.

Oh! fleet but golden moments! well do you repay the long anguish of the past. Love's holiest, noblest privilege, is Delamere's! he may kiss away her fast-flowing tears, he may pillow her pale cheek upon his breast, and all the brightest joys that lovers ever shared, can-

not cement the heart like this sacred partnership of sorrow. He pours into her heart the hoarded tenderness of the past: she has no words; but blushes, rosy messengers from the heart, answer for her. The hand that for the first time presses his, has a sweet and holy eloquence, and he needs no words to tell him he is deeply, wildly loved.

A creaking step is heard upon the stairs; Burridge comes in to boast of what he has done, and the way in which he has done it, and to write to Bab.

Delamere was looking out of one window and Jessica out of another; and Burridge murmured to himself, "Strange lovers those! how different to Bab and me! she wouldn't like me to be looking out of window, when I might be sitting on the sofa with her—fond creature! How I long to be married! Poor Jess! I fancy she'd have been happier with me, and I'm happier with Bab than I could have been with any other woman—I'll be married as soon as I can."

Too happy themselves to endure the thoughts of another's misery and ruin, Delamere, the countess, and Jessica, refused to prosecute the wretched Mrs. Winter and the Tweedles; and even connived at the escape of the former to the Continent, and that of the latter to America, after they had confessed, that the body found was that of Mrs. Tweedle's dead child. Mrs. Winter made some slight attempts at suicide. She took poison, and immediately sent for a stomach pump; she tried a razor, but at the first drop of blood she let it fall, and screamed. She threw herself into a shallow stream, and waded out .- Poor wretch! she had the constant wish without the courage to die. Baffled, disgraced, disappointed of her anticipated revenge, she dragged on a lonely life at Calais, shunned by all there, who, in spite of an assumed name, found out that she was the now notorious Mrs. Winter.

It is certain that she had loved Delamere, if that selfish passion which seeks nothing but its own gratification can be called "love"—



and despair, wrote to Delamere—there were some human feelings in her heart; and she was touched to find that he whom she had so wronged was active in promoting her escape and securing her fortune. The letter, which was of many pages, concluded thus:—

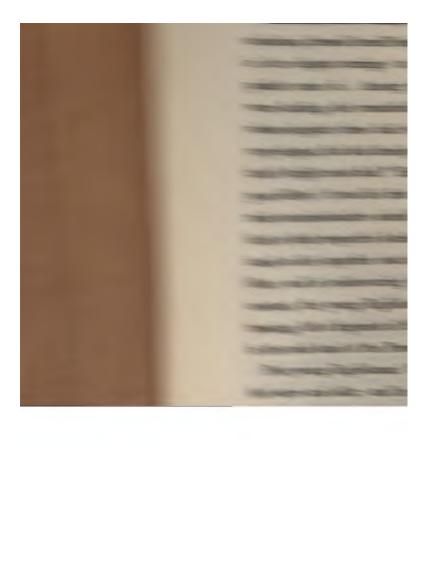
"I have now only to confess, that the voice you heard in your prison on the night before your trial was mine—I bribed your jailors—love, such love as you will never inspire again, had driven me mad; and my soul was on fire with vengeance. You could not understand such passionate devotion as mine; the cold calm affection of a Jessica is better suited to you than this scorching flame.

'This love, which in its dire excess, Would blast where it must fail to bless.'

One day, should you weary of the tame monotony of the life you have chosen, you may recal, with vain regret, your wretched Eveleen. Oh, then,

> ' Si on l'apprends que je respire, Tu te diras elle m'aime encore!'

> > "EVELEEN WINTER."



"How sweet one's native tongue, on foreign shore We meet, Oh, may we meet, to part no more!"

said Marvel. "Dearest Mrs. Winter, this is 'a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told.'"

Mrs. Winter offered him a seat in her carriage. What was to be done about his luggage? Oh, sad discovery! Marvel had no luggage. He had escaped from the hot pursuit of six London tailors, three hatters, four boot and eight glove makers, and as many perfumers; and all that remained to him of all their goods, for which he had endangered his liberty, was his pale blue coat and trowsers, a strange white hat, a pair of dirty white gloves, one pair of thin useless boots, &c.

He candidly told Mrs. Winter his tale of woe,—

" 'What, could I be proscribed at home, And taunted with a wish to roam.'"

He added, " Papa must pay my debts now, or I shall be outlawed.

<sup>&</sup>quot; ' Say, could 'st thou bear to be an outlaw's bride? "

His eyes, which he had an art of filling with traces at will, and his gently modulated voice, did not plead in vain!

Mrs. Winter, who was very rich, offered her purse,—Marvel Brown accepted, saying "beggar that I am, I am bankrupt even in thanks! "Dread Winter! dread, because so beautiful, I have squandered thousands and tens of thousands, and now my heart and lute are all the store that I can bring to thee!"

Alas! for woman's constancy and the durability of violent passions—Marvel's flattering quotations, soft tearful glances, and exquisitely modulated woice did such wonders, that Mrs. Winter in a fortnight from the time of his arrival became Mrs. Marvel Brown. She was so glad to get rid of the name she had so disgraced, and to find herself, at least, nominally protected, and she had such entire faith in the meckness and tenderness of Marvel Brown, that she hurried on the marriage without allowing any time for settlements, and gladly left

Calais for Florence, where she took up her abode.

And was she happy? Ah, ladies! be on your guard against men who modulate their voices, and moisten their eyes. Such men take no such pains at home: there they are often gruff and frowning tyrants.

All Mrs. Winter's fortune was now in Marvel's power, and his dress and equipage surpassed all Florence could boast.

His fair face, soft manners, and musical voice pleased the Florentine ladies, and his flirtations drove Mrs. Winter mad with jealousy.

"Wretch!" she said, one morning that he had refused to show her a glazed and scented note, "wretch! but for me, you would be a beggar. I gave you all—what return have I?"

"A name you need not blush to hear—you had the best of the bargain—you are now Mrs. Marvel Brown: you were . . . . the notorious Mrs. Winter!"

Oh, what a gruff voice! no soft modulation,

no flattering quotation-Marvel was a husband.

"How dare you taunt me thus—how dare you squander my fortune and flirt with others before my very face—what do you mean?"

- " Oh, hang it!"
  - " What can you mean?"
- "Oh, curse it!"
- " I will separate from you!"
  - " 'Tanto meglio,' as La Contessa says."
- " You are a vile brute, a fiend!"
- "Then we are well matched."
- "Where are your soft glances, your flattering quotations, your modulated tones?"
- "Quotations!—Oh, do you want a quotation," growled the young husband, "go you to England, where you're in such good odour. Give up the name with which I 've honoured you, resume your own, and I 'll exclaim,

"And see where surly Winter passes off Par to the north!" "

So saying, he drove to the Contessa's, there to modulate his voice, and softly gaze with tearful admiration, there to quote the flattering rhyme, and make the black-eyed Florentine translate into Italian her own praises.

Poor Mrs. Marvel Brown! hers was a perpetual punishment: she had escaped the vengeance of the law, but retributive justice reached her; notwithstanding her fortune was all in Marvel's power, and his extravagances were fast bringing them both into difficulty, she dreaded to quit him and go forth unprotected into an inimical world, leaving him to complete the ruin of her property,—so she staid to watch it depart, and to make home a sort of domestic "inferno."

Let no one imagine that poetical justice demanded for her a worse fate. She found herself and her fortune in the entire power of a heartless vain coxcomb, young enough to have been her son. Death would surely have been preferable to such a marriage!

## CHAPTER XVIII.

It was a fine autumnal morning, some months after the death of Sir William Vernon; the sun shone brightly through the gothic panes of the little village church of Mandeville, when Dr. Osborne's aged hands bound three couples with "the knot there's no untying."—These three pairs were Jessica (now by the old earl's death Countess of Rockalpine) and Osmond Delamere, Bab Elderton (whom a relapse had compelled, though she felt delays were dangerous, to postpone her marrying till then) and Burridge, and Flounce who was united to Tim! Jessica and Bab were married from the Countess of Mandeville's, for Bur-

ridge's behaviour during the trial had secured him and his intended the lasting regard of Egbert's mother.

Jessica in her white attire, with her pale cheek, her tearful eyes, and her seraphic beauty, formed as strong a contrast to Bab in a yellow hat and feathers, and the yellow cachemire with which the reader is well acquainted, as did the aristocratic and elegant Delamere to Burridge, who wore a bright blue coat, on which Macbotcher had exhausted his skill, with gilt buttons, padded out and pinched in; a bright new auburn wig, redundant in curls and redolent of jasmine, a blue silk stock and a vellow satin waistcoat (made out of a piece of Bab's gown); while white kerseymere pantaloons displayed his leg, and he had chosen a white hat as being most bridegroom-like. Tim had surpassed himself in rubbing him down and polishing him up for the last time; and Bab, that his spectacles might not give him an antiquated air, had contrived to stick a jewelled eve-glass in his eye: the result was that he

was all but blind, and knocked one, and stumbled against another; put the ring on Bab's thumb, and in a mistake kissed Pris. The Eldertons, to excuse all these blunders, industriously spread a report that he was intoxicated with joy.

As for Flounce, she was fine as flowers and ribands could make her, and Tim was in a bran new suit, as much like his master's as he dared to order, or Macbotcher to make it.

The Countess de Mandeville, whose real sufferings had cured her of her imaginary ones, presided in joyous and matronly beauty over the wedding breakfast. Egbert, wild with joy, was now on Osmond's knee,—now with his arms round Jessica's neck,—now admiring, with childish naïveté, a splendid diamond parure, which he had been permitted to present her with.

All the Eldertons—for all were present were enraptured with him, and, to complete his joy, his old friend, Mrs. Dempster Tadpole, (now the mother of a young Tadpole,) was at the wedding; she looked care-worn and old, and many doubted whether her "capital match," as it had been called, had at all increased her happiness.

Dempster himself, as he had been the first to forsake, so was he the first to congratulate Delamere, who was too wildly happy for resentment, and for poor Mrs. Dempster's sake suffered her weak husband to copy him, instead of driving him away to imitate some more dangerous model.

Lady Vernon, now that she saw herself dependent on Jessica, was all meekness and affection. Generally those who trample on us in adversity, are those who would fawn upon and toady us in prosperity. Jessica provided for her handsomely, and she betook herself to Boulogne, where Lord and Lady Stare, ultimately half ruined in fortune and credit, reside with her.

Burridge on his wedding-day was (as many bachelors are at the funeral of their liberty) gloomy and cross; his eyeglass hurt him; he was purblind; his ventilating, elastic, patent paralle gave him a head-ache; his clothes pinched, and his shoes tortured him. He was undersced by all the Eldertons, whom he now broked upon angely as future dependents, and he saw I'm marrying away from him for ever. Bub broited him not;—she was all smiles;—she was Mrs. Burridge;—and she felt quite sure that in a limbe while she should make Burridge ashamed of his present ill humour.

A circumstance occurred which greatly added to the happiness of Jessica on her wedding-day; she received a letter from Marcus—Marcus so long deemed dead! He had escaped the shipwreek in which all had perished except Colonel Flutton and his daughter, who owed their safety to him. After a thousand remarkic accidents they had reached poet; and he wrote just as he and poor Lucy had received the tidings of their father's death, and his posthumous confession. His letter was frank, manly, and generous; but it was evident that the blot upon his name had sunk into his heart; he

said that having been engaged to Miss Hauton, he wished upon this discovery, so fraught with disgrace, to resign her hand; but her devotion, and her father's entreaties, alike prevented; and it was settled that they should marry as soon as he could obtain a company in the regiment of which he was then lieutenant. Lucy added a warmly affectionate letter. She was now a mother, and on her engrossed heart the blow fell less keenly.

They are gone! The matchless steeds bear away the elegant equipage of the Countess of Rockalpine; but she at heart is still Jessica. She is weeping in pious gratitude by her husband's side. What is the world to them—its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all?

Burridge has stumbled into the yellow chariot he bought at the Baker Street Bazaar. Bab puts out her head and shows the whole range of her large white teeth in a farewell smile. Burridge's sulks did not last long, for we are informed by a person who saw him and his bride on the Brighton pier, the morning

after their wedding-day, that they were running races, romping, and shouting with joy. Burridge was in a dressing-gown, slippers, straw hat, and spectacles, and Mrs. Burridge in bridal apparel of white; their joy, we were told, was more like that of a hoyden and schoolboy than of two rational people, whose united ages made—but hush! as they are newly married we will not destroy the reader's interest by telling the amount. Perhaps Macbotcher had something to do with the change, for as he handed the sulky Burridge into his chariot he said,

"Aweel, aweel, mon, why are ye glowrin fra? ye on yer wedding-day, and yer wife sae braw and sae bonny. Cheer up, mon! I see ye with a bonny bairn afore a year's out in yer arms, as like yersel as twa peas."

"Oh, Macbotcher, my coat pinches me so confoundedly!"

"Hoot, toot, mon, pride maun be pinched. Yer a braw bridegroom now, ye maun na look for a' the warld like a barrel o' beer: a blessing on ye baith. Fare ye weel !" and he turned to bid Tim and Flounce good-by: they were humbly setting off in a one-horse chaise for Tim's farm.

Macbotcher was in high good humour; Delamere had not only paid him handsomely for the "braw black suit, and the shroud," but he had made him a wedding present. We must own that, on this joyful occasion, Mr. and Mrs. Macbotcher, the 'prentice Sawney, and a' the bairns, took a drap too much "o' the barley bree," and under its influence Macbotcher let out, that the gallant Coptin would have looked none the waur at his bridal if he, Macbotcher, instead of Stultz, had had the making o' his wedding claiths. "Aweel, aweel," he said, "I'm glad he lived to need 'em ;-I've made a gude penny by him for a' that, and the bonny shroud is worth it a', my bairns! As the Coptin said, he'll never see it without thinking o' his latter end, and the gudeness o' Providence. I saw his bonny bride did na like the looks o' it; but as I told her the siller's na thrawe

awa', for the Coptin's sure to want it suner or later, and it's weel to have it by one in case o' need. I think," he added to Mrs. Macbotcher, with a tear, partly the child of the heart, partly of the bottle, "as this is a holiday, I'll e'en mak ain for you, Girzie."

"Mak ain for yer sel," said the wife, sharply, "there's na hurry for mine."

Tim lives respectable and respected at his farm, but a little under petticoat government: he has given up all his castles in the "hair, for a cottage on hearth;" and never dares, in Flounce's presence, to allude to becoming a "hactor." Flounce's tory principles have a little quashed his daring radicalism. Prosperity, too, has there had its usual effect. When he was a servant, he thought all men were "hequals;" but he is not so fond of that doctrine, now that he is a master.

There are many such instances on record.

Delamere's old housekeeper received her master's bride with prideful joy. He had not, to use her own words, thrown himself away: he had not stooped and picked up nothing: he had married a Countess; and it is astonishing how much more beautiful and elegant Mrs. Willis thought the Countess of Rockalpine, than she had formerly done Jessica Thornton.

And Jessica! she has seized the first opportunity of gliding alone to that boudoir, where, in the hopelessness of her heart, she had wept, to think that she was neither rich nor great; where, as Mrs. Willis spoke in her fond pride of the beautiful and wealthy young Countess, whom, alone, she could wish to see Delamere's bride, she had felt what seemed then so wild and vain a longing for wealth and rank; and had sighed to herself, "Oh, if I were what that woman describes, then should it be my pride to betray all, that now pride shall compel me to conceal."

Rare and divine constancy! Jessica, in her proud prosperity, has redeemed the silent pledge, breathed only to Heaven and her own heart, when she was the forlorn and hopeless protegée. All in that room was unchanged, for poor Mrs. Willis had religiously preserved all, as Delamere had left it; but what was far more strange, a human heart was beating there in joy and glory, with the same wild worship it had known in sorrow and shame; and feeling this, Jessica flung herself on her knees, and thanked her heavenly Father. But a fond arm clasps her waist; a dear voice breathes her name; and the bridegroom, impatient of her long delay, raises and clasps her to his heart.

It was about a year after a marriage that seemed rather to increase than diminish the deep deep love of our hero and heroine, that Jessica was smiling to see her infant boy in the arms of young Egbert, its proud and delighted godfather, when her husband entered the room with a letter from Marcus. It was written in good spirits: it announced that Miss Tadpole (the poor little hump-back), who a short time before had inherited the immense fortune of a distant relation Alderman Pemberton, which he seemed to have left to her,

for no other reason but because he himself had been deformed, and had, therefore, a sympathy with her, having lost her mother by a stroke of apoplexy, had made a will, bequeathing the whole of this property (except twenty thousand pounds which she left to Mrs. Dempster Tadpole) to Marcus; for whom, since Lucy's wedding, she had ever retained the most romantic interest. The sole condition was, his taking with the fortune the name of Pemberton, which she herself had borne, since the death of her cousin, the alderman. weeks after she had made this will, she caught a severe cold; (and having been always very delicate,) she died in consequence. Col. Hauton, who had been attacked by a fever, and who feared he should leave his Clara in a foreign land and in destitute circumstances (for he had been very improvident), lived only long enough to see them united; and Captain and Mrs. Pemberton were then on a visit to Lucy Seymour.

Marcus had purchased immediately a hand-

some annuity for his mother; who, however, still continued to receive Jessica's allowance. She prefers residing abroad; where, with her now excellent income, she lives in splendour, gives grand parties, has an elegant equipage, and has already refused a 'Marquis,' a 'Comte,' a 'Baron,' and all sorts of officers. However, as every destiny has its clouds, her pride is sometimes wounded by allusions to the past. A rejected lover (advised by an envious rival). wrote to her as Mademoiselle Dalton; and sometimes, the only misfortune of her life for which she was not to blame, excludes her from an aristocratic salon, or even a foreign court; but the addition to her income is fast doing away this prejudice.

In conclusion, Marcus let Delamere into a little secret, which Jessica had never revealed to him, and which he had just learnt from Lucy, that she was the writer of the celebrated review, which had played so important a part in their early history.

As the young wife blushed to hear the lover

husband's delighted praise, an old yellow chariot drove to the door, and out came, carefully wrapped up, evidently by a fond wife's care, Burridge, followed by Bab, (grown portly with good cheer and happiness) and glancing proudly at a bundle wrapped up in flannel, and an old macintosh, carried by our old friend Pris.

"It's the very image of poor dear Sir James, you know," said Pris, displaying it to Jessica and Osmond, "except that it has poor dear Dr. Elderton's nose. Well how are you, Lady Rockalpine? How are you, Captain Delamere? The girls will be here presently."

"Don't ye think it like me?" said Burridge exultingly. "What's that yours? Why, my Jacob would make two of it: never was such a child for six months. Now, do ye think it like me?"

"Why, who should it be like, dearest?" asked Bab.

"Oh, it is very like," said Jessica.

" Very like you both," said Osmond.

And that there was no disputing, for it had

Burridge's green eyes, Bab's long nose, its father's wide mouth and high square shoulders: its movements recalled Burridge's; and in a long squeak which it set up, it revealed a falsetto, evidently inherited from Burridge's "I'd be a butterfly."

Bab and Burridge received with a triumphant and important air the congratulations of every body on their charming little Jacob, and seemed from delicacy to abstain from making any remark about Jessica's smaller but really beautiful child.

They glanced at it with a sort of pity and contempt, and then Burridge, catching his own long-nosed and large limbed horror in his arms, cried, "There never was such a boy, I believe—though I was just such another." He then tried to rock it to sleep with, "I'd be a butterfly," but he roused it to an ambition to outscream him; and proudly saying, "It'll have my voice too, I see," he gave it to the alternate embraces of all the Eldertons. All had taken up their final abode with their sister,

Mrs. Burridge. They had, with Bab's assistance, persuaded Burridge that they saved him more than they cost him.

Bab was grown very indolent, and did nothing but lie on the sofa, read novels, eat, drink, and dress, and pet her two Jacobs. Pris acted as housekeeper, and detected the most minute pilferings in the servants or overreachings in the tradespeople, by which she became very valuable in the eyes of the prudent though enamoured Burridge.

Lavy and Dolly still carried on the education of old Jacob, en attendant that young Jacob should be ready to begin his. They paid visits, and arranged parties for Bab, and took all trouble off her hands. They wished they could take themselves off her hands too; but as yet there seems no chance of so desirable an event.

Burridge is kept in good order by their proud and authoritative self-assertion. He is constantly reminded of their value, and of the sacrifice they make in staying with him, when the advantages they would resp by leaving him are unknown.

Burridge did once mutter that they were unknown to him. But being immediately requested by all, (Bab included), in their shrillest tones, to repeat his words, he-alas! for the pride of manhood-disowned them, and humbly said, he was well aware that he was the most fortunate of men! Still Bab and her sisters do their utmost to promote his comfort, and to cheer his age. He is never unprovided with a listener to his songs, his stories, and his boasts. He never finds the buttons off his shirts, his gloves, or his waistcoats; never finds his clothes in disorder, nor his linen damp; never is without a kind hand to mix his negus or his grog, when he is well-his gruel, his posset, or his whey, when aught ails him-Kindness encourages him to constant goodhumour, but any attempt at sulkiness or restiveness is checked with becoming spirit; and as ill-temper is the great enemy of good health, the prompt punishment, and consequent suppression of irritability in him, secures him the best of health.

Bab is a fond wife, but sensibly so. Burridge sees his boy growing up into his beau ideal of perfection—that is, the image of himself. And seldom has so happy an union fallen to the share of one who has allowed his fiftieth winter to find him still a "MARRYING MAN."

THE END.

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